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ABSTRACT

The papers in this volume address the critical issues that arose at the first national conference on teaching assistants. The papers are organized into six sections: (1) "The Teaching Assistantship: An Overview" focuses on the role of the teaching assistant (TA) in the context of the university mission and its organization; (2) "Conditions of TA Employment" examines such issues as stipends, grievances, workloads, and taxation as well as policy and collective bargaining; (3) "Considerations for TA Development" treats some strategic factors in TA preparation, including planning programs and locating them within the university; (4) "Approaches to TA Development" presents papers on general ways in which the preparation of TAs can be addressed, and on particular programs that are in place in various departments and universities; (5) "International Teaching Assistants" explores the special case of the international TA. The papers in this section also talk about planning and implementing programs designed to screen these TAs for language competency as well as to prepare them to teach U.S. universities; and (6) "Task Force Reports and Reflections on the Conference" concludes the volume of papers with observations offered about the conference as well as reports of continuing directions being proposed by the task forces convened at the conference. Each section is preceded by an introductory statement that includes more detail and a summary of the papers included. (JD)

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Institutional Responsibilities
and Responses in the

Employment and Education of Teaching Assistants

Readings from a National Conference

Nancy Van Note Chism, General Editor
Susan B. Warner, Copy Editor

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR
TEACHING
EXCELLENCE

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Foreword

The Center for Teaching Excellence was pleased to be able to exercise leadership for the first interdisciplinary national conference on teaching assistants. The experience of contacting our colleagues across the country who were interested and involved in TA issues was rewarding, and the response was enthusiastic.

At the conference itself, the energy level was extremely high. Information was exchanged, animated discussions took place, and we hope lasting networks were formed. The conference was followed by reports of new initiatives on several campuses and renewed commitment on others.

We are happy now to present an additional product of the conference–a book of readings containing contributions from most of the presenters at the conference. Together, these papers address the many critical issues that arose at the conference: the teaching assistantship within the context of the university, the conditions of TA employment, designing and providing programs for TA development, and the special needs of the international teaching assistant.

We hope that these readings add to the dialogue that occurred at the conference and stimulate additional thinking and reform in the future.

Anne S. Pruitt
Director
Center for Teaching Excellence
The Ohio State University

Introduction

This volume of readings follows its associated national conference in bringing focused attention to the role and conditions of the graduate teaching assistant (TA) in higher education. While not all higher-education institutions employ graduate students as teachers of undergraduates, TAs are a significant part of the teaching force across major universities. TAs are frequently responsible for a large percentage of class sections taught in lower-division courses and thereby directly influence the quality of education that undergraduates experience. Their role in the university is thus embedded in the total context of the university.

The University Context

The graduate teaching assistantship is an important means for providing financial support to graduate students. At some point in their graduate program, many graduate students have appointments as TAs. Successful recruitment and retention of graduate students depend, in part, on the availability of TA financial support.

However, TA employment may conflict with the individual's own graduate program, as the person experiences the simultaneous demands of being both teacher and graduate student. At the same time, universities might choose not to use TAs in teaching roles were it not for financial considerations and competition for faculty time in activities other than teaching, i.e., research projects, publications, external service, university service, and student advising. These complex relationships among institutional roles, goals, and financial support make the graduate teaching assistant both an enigmatic and practical subject for study.

TAs are frequently criticized for their lack of communication and pedagogical skills. Practices in many fields suggest the working assumption that if a TA has an undergraduate or graduate concentration in the subject being taught, he or she is qualified to teach. Yet for many graduate students, the teaching assistantship is their first college teaching experience; it is their induction into the teaching force in higher education.

Institutional policies and programs are frequently not in place and working effectively to support the development of TAs as college teachers. TAs too often are left on their own to "sink or swim" in the complex and challenging demands of college teaching. Faculty who could or do serve as supervisors for TAs may not have time or may not be inclined to provide the TA with needed mentoring. Some faculty may not be adequately prepared themselves to serve as effective supervisors for TAs.

A host of actors at the university-wide, college, and department levels can and do play a role in influencing the quality of support in place for the employment and education of TAs. These actors include academic affairs officers, graduate school administrators, college deans and their staffs, department chairs, undergraduate and graduate committee members, course and department supervisors of TAs, and staff in academic support offices such as instructional development, faculty and TA development, teaching centers, and language programs.

Institutional policies and practices can go beyond the initial recruitment, selection, and orientation for new TAs. Additional resources for the continuing development of TAs as college teachers can be directed at mentoring, colleague assistance, and evaluation of TAs during their teaching assignments. Across and within universities, the policies and practices that provide TAs with needed support are often incongruent or not fully developed and articulated.

Generally, the tasks of TAs fall into three categories: discussion or recitation group leader; laboratory instructor; writer, grader, and/or feedback provider for tests and exams. The title of "Teaching Assistant" can include tasks related to one or more of the above categories, as well as individual tutoring, course and materials development, and quasi-research and laboratory tasks that may be only tangentially related to teaching. Some TAs are expected to teach entire courses on their own while others function in a limited capacity under the close supervision of a senior professor or course leader.

The kind and amount of training/supervision that TAs need to perform effectively in their roles is a function of both the capabilities of individual TAs and the tasks they are expected to perform according to some standard of performance. Unfortunately, institutional data systems seldom go beyond identifying the number of graduate students with TA appointments. We simply do not know, with any confidence, the specific tasks, competencies, and standards of performance that are expected of TAs as they are selected and assigned particular teaching duties.

The large number of international TAs (ITAs) has stimulated additional attention to the adequate preparation and supervision of graduate students who teach. Undergraduate students as well as their parents have at times expressed vocal concerns about the lack of teaching competencies among ITAs, who frequently represent a large percent of TAs in fields such as science, mathematics, and engineering. Some states have taken initiatives to require institutions to carefully screen and prepare international graduate students before placing them in a teaching assignment. Public and institutional concerns for ITAs have highlighted the need for attention to language proficiency, sensitivity to cultural differences, and pedagogical skills for all TAs.

A final aspect to be noted here of the university context for TAs is the preparation of TAs as future faculty. Although the number of TAs who become faculty has declined somewhat in recent years given the employment opportunities in higher education compared to other fields, a considerable number of TAs still go on to become faculty in our colleges and universities. The TA experience contributes directly to the pool of qualified faculty for future positions.

The TA National Conference

Within the context described above, 359 participants gathered in Columbus, Ohio, on November 16-18, 1986, to address and discuss institutional efforts directed at TAs; to disseminate information on program models and research; and to share training materials and other resources. The participants represented 117 U.S. universities, located in 43 states and the District of Columbia, and two Canadian institutions. The United States institutions represented at the conference were distributed across nine regions of the country and included 101 public and 16 private universities. Participants from Ohio State University, the host institution for the conference, numbered 90 and 269 were drawn from other universities.

The potential impact of the conference can be estimated, in part, from the number of undergraduate and graduate students represented by institutional members participating in the conference. Of the 117 United States institutions represented at the TA national conference, 95 of them ranked in the top 150 institutions according to total undergraduate and graduate student enrollment. Approximately one-third of the undergraduate students enrolled in private and public 4-year colleges and universities in the United States (6.1 million total) and graduate students (1.34 million total) were represented by institutional members participating in the conference.

Among the conference participants were department faculty chairs, college and university administrators, personnel in faculty and instructional development offices, directors and staff of writing/composition programs, TAs, TA coordinators, directors and staff in language labs and institutes, and national association and foundation representatives.

Speakers and sessions at the conference were designed around several themes. These included: the TA as a student, employee, and apprentice faculty member; organizing TA development programs on a college campus; preparing, supervising, and evaluating TAs as teachers; screening and preparing international TAs for classroom teaching; and research studies on TA employment and education. Approximately 130 speakers were involved in over 50 concurrent sessions employing paper presentations, panel discussions, small-group discussions, program descriptions, and task groups during the three-day conference.

The Volume of Readings

This volume contains the contributions of those presenters who felt that the content of their sessions could be summarized in written form for a larger audience. The content of the presentations and the papers in the volume are not necessarily the same: the papers were submitted after the conference and many reflect discussions at the conference.

Although universities use different titles, such as assistant instructor and graduate associate, to refer to TAs, we have tried to use the term "teaching assistant" consistently throughout this volume. Similarly, teaching assistants who are nonnative speakers of English are called "international teaching assistants."

This volume of conference readings parallels, for the most part, the major themes or strands of conference topics; however, the groupings are modified somewhat to reflect the actual content of the papers. The readings are organized into six sections:

1. *The Teaching Assistantship: An Overview* focuses on the role of the TA in the context of the university mission and its organization.
2. *Conditions of TA Employment* examines such issues as stipends, grievances, workloads, and taxation as well as policy and collective bargaining.
3. *TA Development Considerations* treats some strategic factors in TA preparation, including planning programs and locating them within the university.
4. *Approaches to TA Development* presents papers on general ways in which the preparation of TAs can be addressed, and particular programs that are in place in various departments and universities.
5. *International Teaching Assistants* explores the special case of the international teaching assistant. The papers in this section also talk about planning and implementing programs designed to screen these TAs for language competency as well as to prepare them to teach in United States universities.
6. *Task Force Reports and Reflections on the Conference* conclude the volume of readings with observations offered about the conference as well as reports of

continuing directions being proposed by the task forces convened at the conference. Each section of the readings is preceded by an introductory statement that includes more detail and a summary of the papers included.

Significance of the Conference and Volume of Readings on TAs

While the conditions of the graduate teaching assistant in universities have not gone without notice over the past several decades, they have not received the careful study, reflection, and concerted attention that is required. The national TA conference and its volume of readings indicate a widespread recognition of the importance of the TA role in United States universities and of the work that remains to be done.

For the first time on a national scale, key actors in our universities were brought together through the TA national conference to address, discuss, debate, exchange resources, and express needs and plans for future directions to improve the education and employment of TAs. The national TA conference and its volume of readings are surely not an end product; they represent thoughts and actions in progress toward important goals that will help shape the quality of education in our universities.

The value of the TA conference and readings will differ across universities and for particular individuals within universities. Some will find that other perspectives of the teaching assistantship (e.g., the state or federal agency perspective) or other important TA topics (e.g., international student exchange programs) have not been addressed. Others will find new and confirming ideas, or ones that are highly debatable. Whichever the case, each university must decide its own course of action. If the conference and readings have served their purposes, they will have contributed to the dedication, encouragement, resources, and teamwork needed to successfully employ and educate our graduate teaching assistants.

G. Roger Sell
Director
Instructional Development and Evaluation
Center for Teaching Excellence
The Ohio State University

Acknowledgements

One of the pleasures in completing a national conference and book of readings is to thank the many people who contributed in significant ways. The ingredients for successful projects are many: talent, timeliness, organization, communication, and dedication, to name a few. The "chemistry" of bringing these all together and making things work is still mostly a craft or art, but reliable information and the appropriate involvement of major stakeholders are also necessary. These acknowledgements trace key developments leading to the publication of the readings in this volume and recognize the outstanding efforts and contributors associated with them.

The idea for the TA national conference associated with these readings originated at a May 1985 meeting of the Great Plains Faculty Development Consortium. Hosted by Del Wright and her colleagues at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the 11 institutions represented by consortium members at the meeting strongly encouraged me to begin dialogues that would confirm perceived needs for a national conference focusing on teaching assistants (TAs).

Following the consortium meeting, Anne S. Pruitt, then Associate Provost at Ohio State, indicated tentative approval for the conference. She maintained her enthusiasm for and continual support of the conference as Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence.

A second check on the feasibility of a TA national conference occurred at the October 1985 meeting of the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education. At that meeting, POD members endorsed the concept of a national conference on TAs and agreed to serve on a National Planning Committee, including:

John Andrews	University of California at San Diego
John Boehrer	Harvard University
Robert Diamond	Syracuse University
Libby Gardner	Texas A&M University
W. Lee Humphreys	University of Tennessee at Knoxville
Larry Loeher	University of California at Los Angeles
Michele Marinkovich	Stanford University
Robert Menges	Northwestern University
Dean Osterman	Oregon State University
Richard Smock	University of Illinois at Urbana
Delivee Wright	University of Nebraska at Lincoln

This group provided early guidance in the formulation of an agenda for the conference and helped collect and review data for organizing the conference.

Following the 1985 POD meeting, Ohio State University formally agreed to organize and host the TA national conference. An Ohio State University Planning Committee, appointed by Associate Provost Pruitt, helped design the conference program and provided valuable advice throughout. Ohio State Planning Committee members included:

Nancy Chism	Center for Teaching Excellence
Gerard Ervin	College of the Humanities
Leonard Jossem	Colleges of the Arts and Sciences
Roy Koenigsknecht	Graduate School
Anne Pruitt	Provost's Office
Roger Sell, Chair	Center for Teaching Excellence
James Siddens	Graduate School
Nancy Zimpher	College of Education

A national needs assessment was conducted in March 1986 to focus on the interests of potential conference participants. National Planning Committee members administered needs-assessment surveys at their institutions that helped identify topics, speakers, and preferences for the conference formats. The idea of a national conference on TAs was once again confirmed through survey responses from graduate school deans, college deans, department chairs, faculty, and TAs themselves. Operational plans for the conference were then set in motion.

Additional professional and financial assistance was provided through three organizations. The American Association for Higher Education (Russ Edgerton and Lou Albert) and the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States (Jules LaPidus) both cosponsored the conference and were instrumental in bringing the conference to the attention of their respective memberships. The Lilly Endowment, Inc. (Ralph Lundgren) helped meet some of the financial costs associated with the conference and readings through a timely grant to Ohio State.

These acknowledgements would not be complete without recognizing two other groups of people. One constitutes the conference speakers and paper authors, task force members, and the conference participants themselves who made the conference and these readings a reality. The other is the staff of the Center for Teaching Excellence who provided support throughout the conference. Particular acknowledgements in the production of this volume go to Nancy Chism, general editor; Susan Warner, copy editor; Erica Warner and Karen Arduini, editorial assistants; Terry Campbell, cover designer; and Andrea Kuntzman and Wendy Marker, typists.

G. Roger Sell
Director
Instructional Development and Evaluation
Center for Teaching Excellence
The Ohio State University

Contents

Foreword iii

Introduction iv

Acknowledgments viii

1. The Teaching Assistantship: An Overview

Introduction 1

The Central Role of the Teaching Assistant in Higher Education 4
Edward H. Jennings

Defending the Indefensible 7
Kenneth Eble

The Context of Preparing Teaching Assistants 14
Hans O. Mauksch

Multiple Perspectives on the TAship: Views of the Developer, the Department Chair, the TA, and the Graduate Dean

Part 1. A Developer's Perspective 19
Teaching in Higher Education: From Hobby to Profession
John D. W. Andrews

Part 2. A Chairman's Perspective 22
Ronald C. Rosbottom

Part 3. A Teaching Assistant's Perspective 25
Abbas Aminmansour

Part 4. A Graduate Dean's Perspective 27
C. W. Minkel

Effectively Utilizing TAs in the University 30
Robert E. Powell

2. Conditions of TA Employment

Introduction 33

The Formulation of University Policy for Graduate Assistantship Administration 35
C. W. Minkel

12

University-Level Policies for TAs: Experience at the University of Wisconsin-Madison 38
Judith S. Craig

Fostering and Monitoring TA Development: What Administrators Can Do 44
Joyce V. Lawrence

Employee or Student? Walking the TA Tightrope

Part 1. Stipends and Workloads 47
Thomas Gething

Part 2. Grievances and Taxes 49
Marilyn J. Baker

Teaching Assistant Collective Bargaining at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Part 1. An Administrator's Perspective 53
Judith S. Craig

Part 2. A Negotiator's Perspective 60
Charles E. Carlson

3. Considerations for TA Development

Introduction 65

A Ten-Year Review of TA Training Programs: Trends, Patterns, and Common Practices 67
Joan L. Parrett

A National Study of Teaching Assistants 80
Robert M. Diamond and Peter J. Gray

Graduate Teaching Assistants' Implicit Theories of Teaching 83
Robert J. Menges and William C. Rando

TA Socialization: A Communication Perspective 91
Ann L. Darling

The Role of Technique in Teacher Training 95
Hildebrando Ruiz

Factors in Locating a Program within the University Organization 104
Larry L. Loeher

Department-Based and Centralized TA Training Programs 109
John D. W. Andrews

TA Pedagogical Preparation: Should a General or Discipline-Specific Approach Be Used? 111
E. Leonard Jossem

The Role of the Professional Organization in the Development of TAs in Physics 115
E. Leonard Jossem

Evaluating TA Development Programs: Problems, Issues, Strategies 118
Kathleen B. Davey and Curt Marion

4. Approaches to TA Development

Introduction 126

TA Training: Professional Development for Future Faculty 129
William E. Davis

Recognizing Outstanding Teaching 132
Thomas A. Langford

Suggestions for Watching Tapes with TAs 134
John Boehrer

TA Handbooks: What Should They Include? 136
Judy G. Bailey

Producing A TA Newsletter 140
Laura Border

The Training of Graduate Teaching Assistants at the University of Washington 144
Jody D. Nyquist and Donald Wulff

An Alternative to a Big-Deal TA Training Program: Cooperative Departmental Efforts on Shoestring Budgets 155
Linc. Fisch

Support Services for Graduate Teaching Assistants at the University of Georgia 158
William K. Jackson

An Overview of an Orientation Program for Graduate Teaching Associates at The Ohio State University 160
Nancy L. Zimpher and Suzan Yessayan

The Graduate Student Orientation Program at Bowling Green State University 167
Joanne Martin-Reynolds and Marian Smith Hurley

The TA Seminar and TA Support Services at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville 171
W. Lee Humphreys

TA Training at the University of Louisville: Creating a Climate 174
Howard B. Altman

A Seminar on College Teaching 177
Delivee L. Wright

Courses on College Teaching 180
Frank J. Vattano and John S. Avens

Helping TAs Respond to Student Writing 187
Christine Farris

Formative Feedback from Peers 193
Kate Brinko, John Habel, and Billiee Pendleton-Parker

Peer Training in a Teaching Improvement Program for TAs 208
Sara Latham Stelzner

Planning and Facilitating a Group Workshop 215
Karen Syvrud Strickland

TAs Help TAs: Peer Counseling and Mentoring 219
Paul Puccio

Advantages of a Course Manual for Multisection Courses Taught by TAs 224
Anita Gandolfo

Integrating Supervision, Evaluation, and Training: Graduate Student Internships in Teaching Composition 227
Darwin L. Hayes

The Student Instructor Program at Brigham Young University 230
Sally Taylor

Policies for Graduate Assistants in the English Graduate Program at Youngstown State University 234
James Henke

A Three-Phase Approach to TA Training: The Program for Associate Instructors in French at Indiana University 239
Cathy R. Pons

Mathematics Roundtable Session 244
Lynda Morton, Phil Huneke, Sia Wong, and Joseph Fiedler

Chemistry Roundtable Session 247
John Bauman and Wendy Walton-Sonntag

5. International Teaching Assistants

Introduction 249

A Survey of International Teaching Assistants in Foreign Language Departments 251
John F. Lalande II and Gerhard F. Strasser

International and American TAs: Similarities and Differences 263
Shirley Ronkowski

The Undergraduate Experience and International Teaching Assistants 267
Diane R. vom Saal

Designing a Training Program for International Teaching Assistants 275
Janet C. Constantinides

Curriculum Considerations for a Campus-Wide International Teaching Associate Training Program 284
Katharine S. Schneider and Scott G. Stevens

Intercultural Communication for International Teaching Assistants: Observations on Theory, Pedagogy, and Research 290
Magdalena Costantino

Developing Listening and Speech Communication Skills: A Course for Prospective International Teaching Assistants 301
Patricia A. Dunkel and Tannaz Rahman

A Multiperspective Approach to International Teaching Assistant Training: The International Teaching Assistant Project of the Center for Instructional Development and Research, University of Washington 307
Debra -L Sequeira and Ann L. Darling

ESL Workshop for Graduate Students at the City College of New York, CUNY 316
Nancy Lay and Linda H. Mantel

Training International TAs at Texas Tech: An Overview 318
Rosslyn Smith

The Effectiveness of Videotaped Protocols as a Training Technique for International TAs 321
Brian Davis

Standard Oral Proficiency Tests for International Graduate Teaching Assistants 334
Jeff Mellor

Screening International TAs for Oral English Proficiency 348
John S. Eck

Innovative ITA Screening Techniques 351
Patricia Carrell, Susanne Sarwark, and Barbara Plakans

Being Seduced by Face Validity: Linguistic and Administrative Issues in Videotaped Teaching Simulation Testing 355
Patricia Byrd

6. Task Force Reports and Reflections on the Conference

Introduction 358

Task Force Report: Establishing a National Clearinghouse of Materials Developed for TA Training 360
Jody Nyquist

Task Force Report: Publishing TA-Related Research and Scholarship 362
Robert J. Menges

Task Force Report: Planning a National Database on TAs 365
George Karas

Task Force Report: Setting up a Consultant Exchange 366
Delivee L. Wright

Task Force Report: Cooperative Funding of Proposals 367
Marilla Svinicki and Robert Young

The Teaching Assistant and the University 369
Dean Jaros

A National Conference on Teaching Assistants: A Department Chair's Response 372
William F. Eadie

1. The Teaching Assistantship: An Overview

Introduction

For many years, the teaching assistantship has appeared to be the most logical and convenient of arrangements, a nicely balanced equation in which the gains and costs to the university and to the graduate student have been equal, or nearly so. The papers in this section allude to the long tradition of teaching as a means of supporting oneself during graduate study. As a group, however, they question whether the balance between costs and benefits to university and to TA is still present.

The authors review the frequently-cited advantages of teaching assistantships: they provide financial support for graduate students and inexpensive and available classroom staff for universities; they offer apprenticeships for future faculty; they create situations in which undergraduates can learn from those who are fresh and able to identify with their concerns; they free faculty from the drudgery of teaching introductory courses; and they help TAs to reinforce and articulate their basic content knowledge.

The picture would indeed be rosy, were it not colored by the disadvantages cited by the authors: the TAship puts inexperienced teachers in the most demanding and important teaching situations; it overburdens graduate students with heavy time-consuming responsibilities that often slow progress toward a degree; it creates the need for supervision of apprentice teachers that faculty are not ready or willing to fulfill; and it allows faculty to divorce themselves from lower-division teaching.

Throughout this set of papers, the authors suggest that in several ways, the "equation" is out of balance. They cite several problems that contribute to this state of affairs: the generally low value placed on teaching in the modern research university, the low status of TAs, role ambiguity and conflict experienced by TAs, and the inadequate pedagogical preparation and evaluation available to TAs.

The Value Placed on Teaching

As Edward Jennings affirms, universities continue to state that teaching, research, and service are important mutually supporting goals. Hans Mauksch points out, however, that "what we do has a more lasting impact than what we say," observing that our undervaluation of teaching has deep roots in the myths and stereotypes that we hold about teaching. In the same vein, John Andrews argues that by relegating programs designed to prepare TAs as teachers to optional status, we reveal our true attitudes toward the value of teaching and possibilities for its improvement. Both Mauksch and Kenneth Eble suggest that unless faculty see themselves as scholars of teaching as well as of a particular discipline, they contribute to the devaluation of teaching and ultimately to the devaluation of the professoriate.

18

TA Status

Closely related to the devaluation of teaching is the low status of teaching assistants. To Abbas Aminmansour, this is painfully apparent when a TA hears students say, "Oh no, not another TA." To Jennings, the phrase *only a TA* "reflects the underside of the teaching assistant's experience." Eble argues that the TAship "creates an underclass, temporary to be sure, but signifying a class system, pretending to be something else." He sees this division as a sort of overspecialization, a division of labor that reinforces low TA status, but also disconnects faculty from important kinds of teaching. He urges TAs to "get off their knees," advice that is only a partial solution, argues Mauksch, that must be complemented by a similar acknowledgment, on the part of the larger university community, of the importance of the teaching function.

Role Ambiguity

Jennings says that TAs are expected to "know their place–if they can figure out what it happens to be." Throughout these papers, the authors describe a role ambiguity that pervades the TAship. The graduate deans, C.W. Minkel and Robert Powell, are concerned about the TA as graduate student. They want to provide a source of support to the most promising scholars, along with experience that will enrich, rather than hinder their progress as scholars. Ronald Rosbottom, speaking from the position of the department chair, is also concerned with the academic progress of TAs, but finds that he must ask many TAs to teach ten contact hours a week in order to provide instructors for the many course sections he has to staff. And, he notes, "TAs find it easy–much too easy–to prioritize teaching over studying."

That priority, however, is not viewed unfavorably by those who are concerned about the quality of undergraduate education. The faculty developers, the department chairs, the proponents of quality teaching, and the TAs themselves all feel compelled to argue that it is crucial that TAs take their teaching seriously. Eble suggests that a fruitful approach may be taken by viewing the education of graduate students more broadly than the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge, but rather as an experience that combines several types of experiences, many of which can be gained through teaching.

Inadequate Preparation and Evaluation

Throughout these papers, the authors allude to a weak link that threatens to undermine the multiple advantages of the TAship: inadequate preparation of TAs for teaching and insufficient feedback for improvement. Minkel, citing historical sources, sees this failure as slippage due chiefly to the press of changes in the demographics of higher education. Powell sees it as a matter of logistics: overburdened faculty have enough responsibilities without the added role of acting as teaching advisors. Eble and Mauksch both contend that our inherent skepticism about the effectiveness of teacher training and the possibility of assessing teaching objectively keep us from attending seriously to pedagogical preparation and evaluation.

Whatever the cause, the authors agree that if the TAship is an apprenticeship, it is often one in which the master teacher is off on another site, leaving the apprentice to sink or swim. It is also an apprenticeship, observes Eble, in which the apprentice spends the entire training period in doing the drudgery without progressing to more advanced responsibilities. Further complicating matters, it is an apprenticeship in which the master teachers, says Rosbottom, are "generally considered to be useful (but second-class) citizens."

Taking seriously the responsibility to develop TAs as teachers would require money, as Rosbottom and Powell point out; rewarding and encouraging faculty to view the teaching of teaching as honorable and appropriate work, as Mauksch and Eble observe; and implementing university requirements to ensure adequate teaching preparation, as Aminmansour, Andrews, and Minkel advocate.

Summary

Although both Powell and Rosbottom suggest that we might look beyond the TAship for other arrangements, such as part-time faculty or a "respectable class of university-level teacher" that would better serve our multiple needs, the authors of these papers seem to accept that the teaching assistant will continue to occupy a central role in higher education, but that the institution must be enhanced by efforts to augment the status of the TA, clarify the purposes of the arrangement, and give the TAship the resources and attention it demands.

–Nancy Chism

The Central Role of the Teaching Assistant in Higher Education

Edward H. Jennings

I am delighted to welcome you to The Ohio State University for this national conference on the universities' responsibilities and responses in the employment and education of teaching assistants. It is an honor, and entirely fitting, that this group should gather at Ohio State. And it is a pleasure to have you here because the time has certainly come to pay serious attention to these issues of importance in higher education.

In the university, we are accustomed to talk about–and sometimes pontificate about–what lies at the center of our endeavor: Undergraduate education is the heart of a great university. The liberal arts are the core of the academic enterprise. Scholarly research at the forefront of knowledge is the essential characteristic of the university seeking excellence. The creative mix of undergraduate, graduate, and professional education is crucial to the institution. In a public university, especially a land-grant university, access and service are vitally important.

Indeed, all of these factors truly *are* central to our academic mission. No single one of them is the only center point from which the rest of the academic enterprise emanates. And while individuals within the institution may concentrate more or less on any one of these aspects, the character of the university as a whole depends upon the mix. Or, to use a different metaphor, the character and quality of the performance depend upon all the roles and all the players involved.

Teaching assistants stand at the center of the enterprise in that they play such a multitude of these roles. They must respond to all the other players, often in conflicting ways. TAs are simultaneously students and teachers, experts and beginners, inheritors of tradition and creators of the next generation of scholarship, amateurs, seasoned professionals, and members of a bewildering array of peer groups.

Teaching assistants partake of some of the characteristics of students, faculty, and staff. They may be looked upon with respect or disdain, or an uncomfortable mixture of the two, by other members of the university community. At times given considerable authority over a classroom or section of an undergraduate course, they may also be expected to "know their place"–if they can figure out what it happens to be.

The phrase, "only a TA," heard at times from undergraduates–or even, most unfortunately, from faculty or administrators–reflects the underside of the teaching assistant's experience. The positive side is the TA's relationship to the educational enterprise. His or her own education should be enriched by the process of teaching itself. Good teaching, like good writing, challenges and refines thinking. Explaining concepts to one's students and drawing from those students their own understanding of the subject matter require clear knowledge on the part of the teacher. This is a great benefit to the teacher as well as the student.

Teaching assistants also are the future of higher education. Being a graduate student and a teaching assistant is not just a phase one passes through while on the way somewhere entirely different. Many of our TAs will become our faculty colleagues and the next generation of scholars in the near future.

Pelikan's study of graduate education, commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation, is entitled *Scholarship and Its Survival*, and this reflects a true assessment of the importance of graduate education. The survival of scholarship–both research and teaching in the context of our colleges and universities–depends upon the quality of graduate education. The demands of teaching and research are great, for faculty members and for their apprentices.

Clearly, teaching assistants stand at the center of university education. The center is a place of potential power, challenge, opportunity, and authority–and of potential discord. The TA may be assaulted by conflicting role expectations. All too often, what is at stake in the survival of scholarship is the survival of teaching assistants, who may be sacrificed in the process.

We expect a great deal from our graduate associates who have teaching responsibility. It is not always the case that we provide the necessary support to make the TA's experience an integral part of a graduate education. But if we do not fulfill our responsibility to teaching assistants, we do a disservice not only to the graduate students themselves, but also to the university.

We owe this responsibility to our undergraduates, our TAs, and the institution as a whole. A university cannot achieve excellence, cannot use all of its human resources well, without attending to the issues inherent in the employment and education of its teaching assistants.

One of these issues is the broad and complex issue of support, not only financial but educational and personal. Our teaching assistants must be valued for their contributions, and they must know that they are valued.

We depend heavily on our TAs. We depend upon them to care about their teaching and about their studies, and to apply themselves sincerely to both efforts. We must be careful to give them this message by providing the necessary opportunities for training and assistance to make excellence in both teaching and scholarship attainable.

Correspondingly, if we value undergraduate education, we must give our undergraduates the message that we care about the quality of undergraduate teaching. Resources must be available to guide those who are charged with undergraduate teaching, whether they are full professors or graduate teaching assistants.

In recent years, much has been said on the subject of international graduate students who teach. Certainly, the ability to communicate in English is necessary for those who teach our students. And as certainly, the undergraduate students bear a responsibility in the matter as well. But this controversy is a small part of a greater issue: the issue of ensuring quality in undergraduate education.

What is important to the institution, and to higher education as a whole, is that here undergraduate and graduate education are inextricably linked. Making the resources available for excellence will benefit our TAs and our undergraduate students alike. This is a far greater matter than the custom, or the expedience, of employing TAs to share the teaching burden of a department.

When our TAs are well prepared for their various roles, we have a corps of apprentice scholars and teachers available whose role in the university is truly central and vitally important. In sociologist Erving Goffman's terms, they are members of a performance team, working together with other members to foster the goals of higher education.

The various kinds of performances in which a TA is involved, the various roles the TA plays–in the classroom, discussion section, the seminar, the informal gathering with faculty members or other graduate students–will be challenging and enriching, rather than stressful. The strain of continually playing discrepant roles, in which the player is ostensibly but not thoroughly a member of the team, will be reduced.

The process of getting through graduate school is often compared to an initiation rite, and some of the discomfort associated with being a graduate student is probably just the pain associated with any transition. Some of it is the result of putting inexperienced players into demanding roles. Our purpose must be to provide whatever support we can to help our TAs become confident, expert teachers.

The necessary pain that graduate students experience must come from the creative labor inherent in the academic endeavor. It is not easy to be a scholar or to be a teacher. It is not easy to learn new roles and new skills, to become a mature member of the academic profession. But it is worth doing.

Those of us whose business it is to respond on behalf of our institutions must recognize and support our graduate students' efforts to become both teachers and scholars. We must take those efforts seriously and direct our attention to creative responses to the challenges posed.

This conference is one important way of addressing that task and of continuing our commitment to excellence in undergraduate and graduate education. I wish you the very best as you proceed with your deliberations.

Edward H. Jennings is President of The Ohio State University.

Defending the Indefensible

Kenneth Eble

A well-meaning sometime friend of mine asked me when I mentioned going to this conference, "What is the state of the teaching assistant today?" As if TAs were in a *state*, or were some kind of *distant principality*; in the first instance, probably needing some kind of charitable therapy, or in the second, needing some sympathetic gesture like erecting TA shacks symbolic of divesting them of freshman composition and remedial math. I told him that I didn't know, that I was going to this conference to find out, and added, since he was at a university where almost a third of the introductory courses were taught by teaching assistants, he should know or could, if he chose, easily find out.

He said he really hadn't had time lately (he is my age) to *mingle* (I think that was his term) with *them* much, but he supposed things were going all right. Fortunately, our conversation was terminated at that point. The building burned down after a tremendous explosion of some arcane chemicals kept by some research department and, what with falling bodies–of TAs mostly, I think–choking fumes, and somewhat obnoxious fallout, we turned to other topics. I believe it was about whether the faculty club should raise the dues for part-time faculty or deny them membership altogether.

Since then (this was several weeks ago), I have had an opportunity to explore my former friend's question. (He, alas, stumbled as we left the building and was hit, not by an emergency vehicle, but quite ironically by a supply truck slowly backing up to retrieve bluebooks from the flames.)

I was assisted immeasurably in my explorations by a manuscript, *College Teaching: A Primer for Teaching Assistants*, that had just been sent to me by a major publishing company for review. It is a curiously uncritical document, but full of information that I will draw upon here with apologies to the authors, whose identities were not given by the publisher.

The manuscript begins with a history of TAing. Academics cannot be torn away from prefacing everything with a history. If a professor were permitted to give a five-minute talk at the final judgment, he would begin by giving a history of mankind up to then. At any rate, according to these authors' research, teaching assistantships began at Johns Hopkins in 1876. Students there took to moonlighting by "lecturing to undergraduates," and thus the TA system began–incidentally, so to speak, almost entirely out of economic necessity, scarcely touched by academic ideals, planning, contexts, or even thought, a condition that has existed pretty much down to today.

My source goes on to note how the system affected one graduate student/instructor at Harvard around 1900:

> I read and marked over 700 themes a week. Whenever I entered the room, I was greeted by the high pile of themes on the table awaiting my attention. I read very few books the whole year--there was not time. I never went to bed before midnight. With the highest respect and admiration for my colleagues, nothing on

> earth would have induced me to continue such brain-fagging toil another year. (Phelps, 1912)

The relentlessly cheerful manuscript from which I am getting this material comments: "Fortunately most contemporary TAs are not expected to engage in 'brain-fagging toil.'" Hmmmmmm.

The shaping of American research universities on a Germanic model paralleled the growth of large universities dominated by the graduate school and the growth of the TA system. After World War II, teaching assistantships were the major way of supporting graduate students and teaching basic undergraduate courses.

A higher education system growing from about three million students at the beginning of the 1960s to 12 million in the 1980s obviously needed large numbers of TAs. The continuing withdrawal of professors from teaching at the lower division or from undergraduate work altogether added to the need. My source furnished an example of present dimensions of TA instruction. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1985, 95% of discussion sections, 75% of lab sections, and 40% of all lectures in lower-division courses were taught by TAs. The source also says that 82% of discussion sections, 44% of labs, and 12% of lectures are handled by TAs at the upper-division level (a fact I find hard to believe, or believing, to accept).

So that is the basic history. It is nice to provide histories, even of pogroms and pestilences; it makes the dimensions of them so orderly, able to be grasped, and thus filed away. Perhaps that is what caused the authors of this manuscript to view the TA system as so benign, as offering both shelter and sustenance for young men and women pursuing academic careers.

I think it poor shelter and weak sustenance, indefensible within any world slightly better than the one we occupy. Still, I will defend it, as weakly as I am able. Acknowledging this history and drawing upon our own experiences–for I think that for most of you here that experience includes being on both sides of the TA system–what is to be said for and against it?

My authors were chiefly engaged in defending it, so I will simply set forth the most important arguments they make without disagreement or assent. They are familiar ones:

1. Teaching assistantships are a necessary form of scholarship, enabling large numbers of students to have the economic support that allows them to pursue graduate study and many of them to become college and university teachers.
2. They provide a corps of teachers of beginning subjects necessary to serve large numbers of students within a higher-education system that is continually expanding, both in variety and in numbers of those being offered the benefits of higher education.
3. They create a community of scholars-in-process, enlarging the dimensions of formal graduate work by fostering colleagueship among TAs and, to a lesser extent, among TAs and faculty.
4. They provide an opportunity for apprenticeships in teaching that range from menial but necessary chores to full responsibility for classroom instruction.

Some other claims are made for the TA system: that it "provides the most efficient use of human resources," "it is helpful socially," "it personalizes undergraduate education," and "it facilitates egalitarianism." I question the merits of these claims. Sweatshops and stoop labor can probably be defended as efficiently using human resources; there are more important questions to ask of these practices than whether they are efficient. If the TA system facilitates socializing, maybe it is because graduate work otherwise provides so little. The egalitarianism is that of equality within castes of an aggressively hierarchical structure. As TAs do personalize education for many undergraduates, it seems remarkable only in that the professoriate has accepted depersonalization. Then, too, the TAs' professional studies prepare them for the time when, as members of a privileged class, they can be depersonal again.

Arguments against or about the ill effects of the TA system are as familiar as those for; most are simply the obverse side of the coin:

1. It fosters education on the cheap; it exploits the TAs' teaching and the students under their tutelage.
2. It creates an underclass, temporary to be sure, but signifying a class system, pretending to be something else.
3. It fosters a cautious and conforming scholarship and a pedagogy of pooled inexperience, reverse modeling ("not doing what my professors have done"), or no pedagogy at all.
4. It supports faculty self-interest, neatly separating the drudgery of basic instruction from the glory of specialized scholarly pursuits.

I am attempting to arrive at no judicious balance here. I think the TA system is indefensible, like much in academia, and I think it will be not so much defended as kept in place. As for myself, I defend it as I defend other indefensible academic practices (grades, credit hours, lectures, research papers, word processors in faculty offices)–only to make it easier to subvert them and somewhat nullify their evil effects.

My line of defense of the TA system takes the form of four recommendations:

First, get the TAs off their knees.

Second, put the education of teaching assistants first and their exploitation second, or last.

Third, recognize what teaching assistants are both doing and preparing to do.

Fourth, learn *from* them as distinguished from learn *with* them or *teaching* them.

To make myself clear, I will begin by citing the difficulties with which TAs have struggled to gain professional recognition. Very few teaching assistants, despite their numbers, are organized in any way. Collective bargaining agreements, I am told, are in effect at the University of Oregon and the University of Michigan. At the University of Wisconsin, efforts in this direction have gone on since 1966, with strikes in 1970 and 1980, rejection of the right to bargain collectively both before and after these dates, and 1985 legislation giving them the right. Reasons for a lack of organized strength are obvious. TAs are not only a subclass but also a transient class. Actions contrary to an employer jeopardize not only their employment, but also their education and their educational future. And administrations and faculty and institutions often have very heavy hands.

In 1970, shortly before the University of Wisconsin TAs staged their first strike, I was asked by TAs at the University of Minnesota to help them stage a day-long workshop. I was then directing a Project to Improve College Teaching and had some small funds to support worthy causes. In this instance, they enabled me to spend the day on the Minneapolis campus, to take part in various sessions describing and discussing the situation of TAs on that campus, and to provide a lunch for the TAs and their guests. I was shocked by what I heard and most by the apologetic defenses that administrators made of practices they did not seem any too keen about themselves. At noon we were conducted to a kind of cafeteria in a large building and took our trays to a room that the TA in charge had reserved for the group. We had hardly seated ourselves in the corner of a fairly nondescript room when a faculty member (I would say an associate professor in mechanical engineering) came up to me, since I was wearing a coat and tie and obviously the oldest one in the group, and said, "Don't you know this is reserved for the faculty?" I was not so much outraged as unbelieving, not so much by the nasty assertion of professorial privilege as by the gracelessness of any human, if it was human, behavior. I could not, in fact, reply, not even to say that I was "faculty," and not, thank God, of his institution, and that I was paying for the lunch besides.

The next illustration is current, a self-evaluating instrument for TAs that comes at the end of the manuscript I have been examining: *College Teaching: A Primer for Teaching Assistants*. The first half dozen questions are:

1. Have you become an authentic you in the TA role?
2. Are you efficient in carrying out your instructional and administrative duties?
3. Are you a good citizen as an office mate, member of a course staff, and employee of a department?
4. Have you acquired a positive teaching assistant style?
5. Are you liked and respected by your students?
6. Do you treat all of your students, other than terrorists ("terrorist" is a cutesy term the authors use to describe students who are probably not authentic and good office mates and positively styled and efficient and dutiful), with attention and respect?

I do not want to be harsh on these authors nor on teaching assistants. They did not create the system and they are under heavy constraints to bend to it. But I cannot accept the image of the TA that comes through on this checklist. The docile, authority-ridden, acquiescent, and likely unimaginative, uninspired, and uninspiring person is not one I would want as a college teacher. Besides, those positions are already filled.

My second point would put education first and exploitation second. I am not talking about wages and working conditions, which could probably be improved everywhere. Nor am I concerned with the common complaint of both faculty and TAs that teaching responsibilities divert the students' attention from their coursework. I am talking about the general disregard for the students' education as distinct from their graduate work and their employment. A change in this respect would begin by recognizing what education might be other than the lectures, seminars, research projects, the theses and dissertations that constitute most of graduate study. Will the day come when professors will stop asking me, an English professor by years of graduate study and TAing, why I am mixed up with education, and begin asking themselves why they are not?

I do not set aside my English training, mostly because it enabled me to read and to write, and by those two routes–if one doesn't wholly forsake the virtues of not reading and not writing and of engaging in conversation and sex and travel and charitable acts and love–one may learn something of the world and even give something back to it. But not all graduate programs were as permissive as mine, and therefore they are almost certain to be misdirected, the chief misdirection being the cutting off of students for too long a period from perspectives and learning other than those prevailing in the discipline in which they are being educated.

Most of this is mere training. Education is discursive as well as–more than–inculcative. It is personal as well as–more than–professional. It speaks to both part and whole and to the part and the whole simultaneously, as when we are educated to any whole body activity so as to feel the arc of an arm's swing and at the same time experience the complex thrill of an entire body's force and torque being marshaled to a desired end. If this is true of the body, think what it must be of body and mind and soul, all to be conjoined in the delicate and complex lifetime work of educating. We have not yet begun to educate in this sense and the graduate schools are the furthest behind.

So my sense of exploitation goes beyond students doing tasks their superiors shirk and implanting in both a sense that someone is being done a favor. That is mere economics. It can be made bearable by putting up with and getting around and awaiting the day. But the larger exploitation is the doing of all those things to gain a position where the induced blurring of vision is passed on to generation after generation.

As to the educating that might replace this exploitation, amplifying my next point should clarify this. What are teaching assistants both doing and preparing to do? The majority will become college teachers, and it is to this majority that I am speaking. I hope some TAs will become competent chemists, estimable novelists, and businessmen and women successful enough to endow chairs for TAs. But these are not my concern.

We–I'm speaking to faculty now–know a great deal about being professors. That is what we are, and even the most remote of us is engaged in all that goes on beyond mastery of our specialized competences. We even know a good deal about teaching. And something more than our graduate students about living. Very little of this gets transmitted to the next generation of college teachers. In-service training programs for assistants are largely defensive–minimal programs anticipating complaints that students might make about teachers who have never taught before. What is needed is an intelligent attention to professional responsibilities, chief of which is teaching.

There is no shortage of advice about how this might be done. A persistent theme in all the close studies of how graduate students might be better prepared as teachers is that any program should be closely tied to practice and engage the most highly respected members of the faculty. Teaching assistantships do provide a great deal of practice teaching. But in at least three respects, the system fails badly in making the most of that practice. First, it commonly restricts the TAs to limited experience, usually with only one course–freshman composition, say, or entry-level math. Second, it commonly allots supervision to faculty members who have been, often unfairly, consigned to the lesser functions of the department. Third, it does little to enlarge the perspective and skills acquired by teaching assistants talking to other teaching assistants, which, even in its limitations, may be the most pedagogically defensible part of the system.

Central to imaginative, effective, and stimulating components of graduate study is the eroding of attitudes that: (a) see TAs as a source of cheap labor, and (b) see graduate study wholly devoted to developing subject matter competence. With respect to the latter, teaching a variety of courses in reasonably close conjunction with respected members of the faculty is likely to be a superior way of gaining such competence.

My final point is a murky one, likely to be misunderstood and maybe not a good idea anyway. I have stated it as learning *from* TAs as distinguished from *with* them and *teaching* them. One important thing to be learned–increasingly important as we abandon more introductory courses–is who those beginning students are and what they may be learning, all those things that an educator might like to know and could best learn first-hand, but which at the least could be learned second-hand. Such learning could be established as an essential part of faculty-TA discourse, the more useful because it would put the TA, for some portion of his or her graduate study career, in the position of having the superior knowledge of an important kind. I am well aware of what this might entail, but if we are to do significantly better in preparing college teachers, we must break away from many comfortable but unexamined practices.

My cautions about the faculty learning *with* TAs is meant to dispel the easy, often sentimental, notion that all distinctions between teacher and taught disappear–we faculty down there "in the trenches," as the saying goes, absorbing the jolts and bruises, sharing (well, that wouldn't include wages) all the TAs go through. To be sure, what I have just said implies closer connections than now exist between faculty and TAs at the point of their teaching–not just their problems in conducting classes, but the wider range of matters that should be a faculty member's concern: how we are dealing with those students and our subject matter at the crucial entry point of their college years. There can be no shirking that nor the actual exposure to the reality of introductory courses and beginning students.

The reality is that a large part of the faculty has abandoned the lower division, and I am proposing here a way of establishing connections of another kind. The most important first step is to establish with the graduate faculty that work with their students, most of whom are TAs, involves more than classroom instruction or supervision of thesis work.

To suggest what is at stake, consider what is now happening in English. English departments are still the largest employers of TAs, TAs teach the one universally required course–freshman composition–upon which college success may most depend, and English department faculty move further and further away from exercising any responsibility. Under the guise of "writing across the curriculum," departments have gotten out from under the burden of staffing or supervising or even worrying about writing. Well before any respectable discipline called "Freshman Composition" has in fact emerged, English departments have turned over basic writing to shadow entities–a writing program or a communications staff, usually composed of a faculty member or two who finds administrative responsibilities more congenial than actual teaching, and 50 or 60 or hundreds of TAs, the great majority still pursuing degrees in English but cut off at the point of their teaching from their faculty mentors. There is an even worse consequence in that "writing" becomes a mere technically induced skill, cut off from literature and by that means from realms of cognitive and affective thought that have made a conjoined reading and writing so basic to human learning.

I hate to end on this note, but I did not create the condition, nor do I intend to imply that TAs are to blame. I intend just the opposite: that TAs, permitted to get off their knees or just getting off their knees without anyone's permission, may resist in some numbers the notion that a lifetime career of reading nothing but freshman composition papers is a fitting occupation for woman or man. I am not demeaning it; I am just saying that, as we reduce the variety of work we do, as we diminish the interchange among levels of those dealing with that work, as we find subclasses to do our dirty work, we threaten to demean all work, to turn into drudgery that which escapes by virtue of connection with that which is not, and to trivialize our supposed higher pursuits.

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Kenneth Eble is Professor of English and University Professor at the University of Utah.

The Context of Preparing Teaching Assistants

Hans O. Mauksch

It is an old adage that what we do has a more lasting impact than what we say. Observed, actual behavior that differs from norms of morality or honesty makes a more lasting impact than the best speech advocating goodness. One cannot help but be reminded of this contrast when casting an observing eye on the education and utilization of teaching assistants in postsecondary institutions in the United States.

It is most encouraging to observe the scope of the National Conference on Employment and Education of Teaching Assistants conducted by the Ohio State University and to observe the enthusiastic response to this much-needed event. There seems to be agreement that improvements are needed in the selection, preparation, and use of teaching assistants. Well-founded concern has been expressed not only about the undergraduate students who frequently encounter only teaching assistants during their lower-division experience but also about the impact of the current patterns on the careers and capabilities of the graduate students who serve as TAs.

It is the contention of this presentation that programs with a narrow focus on TA education and employment cannot succeed in isolation and that even the most ambitious, sincere, and well-intentioned special programs will suffer the fate of a straw fire whose flames shine brightly but briefly without long-lasting fuel. The organizational and symbolic status of teaching in postsecondary academia is the context within which one has to examine TA training and within which one must assess the opportunities for instituting change. Observations on college and university campuses and perusal of the literature reveals with persuasive evidence that teaching is essentially a devalued component of the professor's range of tasks and that there are a number of myths and stereotypes that mitigate against accepting teaching as a professional skill and knowledge-based activity. It is part of a professor's responsibilities and requires study, experimentation, and improvement.

These assertions are not in conflict with the romantic halo that surrounds the role and function of the teacher. "The great teacher," "the wise teacher," and "the brilliant speaker" are all adored stereotypes that have found their expression in lore and literature and, indeed, at times in a real experience. The root of these perceptions lies in the assumption that the quality of teaching results from innate talents and that those who teach well do so because of a gifted endowment and not because they have worked on their teaching repertoire and their efforts to continue learning. This myth sets the stage for the aura within which the graduate student is introduced to teaching responsibilities. "You either have it or you don't" is the substance of a frequently heard comment. Accepting the myth that, when we are in the classroom, we do as well as we are "meant" to do expresses the belief in the hegemony of talent over training and, thus, does not translate easily into motivation to teach about teaching.

A second basic assumption that mitigates against expending a great deal of effort on mastering the processes of teaching essentially holds that substantive expertise is the fundamental key to teaching and that attention to pedagogy amounts to gimmickry and somehow is in conflict with scholarly dignity. Just as the violin soloist must develop a profound understanding of Beethoven's violin concerto if it is to be performed, emphasis on thorough knowledge and scholarship is an important and essential, but not an entirely sufficient precondition. Without mastering the playing of the violin and without commanding the intricacies of eliciting the best sounds from this instrument, all the details about Beethoven's life and compositions will be in vain. Likewise, exclusive concern with the knowledge base of a unit to be taught will not receive its due nor will the students benefit if the conduct of the teaching-learning relationship is devoid of skill, sensitivity, and the fine tuning of the teaching-learning process.

Against this backdrop of opinion, the future teaching assistant will approach with hesitation any course or training program devoted to teaching. This temptation to view pedagogy with a jaundiced eye is intensified by the fact that the vast majority of current faculty have never experienced systematic preparation for teaching and are likely to feel that, since they are presumably doing well, the next generation does not need these newfangled programs. Surveys of graduate curricula in several disciplines have shown that systematic learning experiences designed to prepare graduate students for teaching are very rare. They are scarce as discipline-based efforts and also as campus or college-wide programs. A few universities stand out for having tackled this issue during the last few years.

Some slices of reality affecting faculty careers give a structural basis for the negative aura of teaching. It is a sad fact that promotions and raises are linked predominantly to research, publications, and creative products, and teaching tends to be trivialized and devalued. In no way whatsoever should these comments be interpreted as casting inquiry and creative pursuits in conflict and competition with teaching. It is quite feasible to excel in both activities as it is, unfortunately, possible to be mediocre in both. Some studies have suggested that the correlation between these activities is quite random and probably influenced by other, extraneous conditions ranging from personal characteristics to institutional climate. Thus, without suggesting that these two components of the professor's function are in conflict, the need to give dignity and reward to teaching must not signify a call for rewarding research less, but rather for rewarding teaching more. There is a sad bit of reality to the words of the graduate faculty advisor who warns his or her graduate students not to devote too much effort to teaching because that is not where the driving sprockets of career and success can be found. Even many liberal arts colleges that loudly proclaim their commitment to teaching frequently do not translate professed belief into action. Real support and real rewards, even in these institutions, are not always earmarked for those who take teaching seriously.

If inquiry, research, and publications are presented as the primary purposes of doctoral study, the recruitment of teaching assistants is conducted under skewed conditions. In most instances, the graduate students selected are "promising future researchers," high achievers in traditional terms, and students whose economic and family situations justify need for support. Interest in teaching or commitment to a teaching career only rarely are major considerations in selecting a teaching assistant. The consequences of these prevailing attitudes must not be minimized. The quality of the human performance is the product of several crucial factors of which knowledge and technical competence represent only a segment. Motivation, a sense of purpose, a supportive environment, and the attainability of rewards are significant parts of the whole picture. After observing the selection and employment of TAs in several disciplines, one is tempted to admire the degree of seriousness and effort with which many graduate students approach these responsibilities, notwithstanding the negative modeling and the neglect that they encounter.

Most professors are willing to discuss the research projects of their students. Should the graduate student, however, wish to explore with a professor various ways of teaching the content of the next class session, the student may encounter surprise and trivialization. The consequence of this climate is represented by the all-too-frequent pattern of last-minute course assignments and minimal orientation that accompanies the sometimes difficult uncertainties that graduate students encounter while waiting to learn about a TA job for the semester that will start in only a few days.

Crowning the assembly of stereotypes that mitigate against taking seriously any effort at learning to teach is the myth that teaching cannot be evaluated, although the product of research presumably translates into objective and fair criteria of assessment. Both ends of this dichotomy are convenient but false. Publications and creative works may lend themselves more easily to pseudoquantification by counting pages and listing citations but, indeed, there is great variation in the contribution to knowledge and the evidence of scholarship that is hidden beneath taxonomic convenience. Teaching, on the other hand, is by no means as idiosyncratic and artistically unique as is frequently asserted by members of the professoriate. One has to grant two obstacles to evaluating teaching. It is difficult to assess any activity that is believed to rest entirely on innate talent, not subject to any criteria of achievement and not accepted as involving principles and autonomous knowledge. Secondly, while the process and product of research is considered open to public and professional scrutiny and challenge, teaching is conducted in a peculiar atmosphere of privacy in which the curiosity and visitation by colleagues is considered in some circles improper, if not bordering on the unethical.

Elaborate approaches to faculty evaluation have been proposed, discussed, and, thereafter, neglected. Most proposals involved more than the mere reliance on student evaluations as the sole source of data. As important as student-based data are, they cease to be valid if they are the only source. Teaching evaluation must include, above all, the professor's self-evaluation efforts, since this constitutes the database for a professional assessment process. Evaluation by peers, evaluation of teaching products and achievement are usually considered necessary components to join the view of students. Lastly, the evaluation of teaching should include evidence of scholarship in planning, preparing, and implementing a teaching-learning program.

These pages seek to convey the flavor and the organizational context that influence the way the graduate student is introduced to the teaching dimension of the professor's role and how he or she receives the orientation to the significance of this function, to the effort it deserves, and to the intellectual and professional challenge represented by the classroom processes. The best-made plans for TA training are probably no fair match for the negative messages and devaluing behaviors that are associated with the early contacts with teaching responsibilities. The very language of academic discussions demonstrates the pervasive double standard that we apply to professorial functions. The categorical distinction between honorific tasks and chores is exemplified by the dichotomy between "scholarship" and "teaching." In many institutions and in many disciplines, articles about teaching, the publishing of textbooks, and the participation in teaching-oriented professional events simply do not count towards promotion and tenure. The perception and the allocation of value that seems to prevail in postsecondary institutions is expressed in Figure 1.

Scholarship and teaching are viewed as distinct, if not mutually exclusive activities. No wonder that graduate students approach their teaching responsibilities as TAs with ambivalence if not with negative anticipation. A profession that denigrates the worth of the very function that justifies its existence, by expressing its main societal mandate cannot be surprised if confusion, reluctance, and avoidance of commitment characterize the socialization of the succeeding generations.

Figure 1. The Prevailing Stereotype

Scholarship	Teaching
High Reward	Low Reward

Figure 2. A More Complex Model of Teaching and Research

	Research	Teaching
Scholarship	1	2
Technical Productivity	3	4

Figure 2 represents an effort to portray an alternative pattern of allocation of professional recognition. It acknowledges the distinction between inquiry and teaching. However, it also distinguishes between the scholarly process and the technical orientation. The design of Figure 2 suggests that research as well as teaching can be performed in a scholarly fashion with scholarly goals and that both can also be performed in a technical framework whereby productivity per se becomes the object of endeavors. The carry-over from Figure 1 suggests that in many academic settings cells 1 and 3 are currently the recipients of recognition and reward while the existence of cell 2 is denied. A very different academic climate for teaching and for the recruitment and training of teaching assistants would exist if there were a reward system that acknowledged the common merit of cells 1 and 2 and placed the crucial distinctions in the worth of academic activities between scholarly and technical pursuits, be it in the analysis of data or the conduct of classes. This pattern and this distribution applies to all fields of knowledge and all pursuits–from philosophy to chemistry, from engineering to English literature. In each academic domain there are those who practice scholarship in the laboratory, in the studio, and in the classroom; they are distinct from those who routinize productivity and performance, massage data for one more publication, and milk the textbook without demonstrating inquiry or intellectual pursuit.

The selection, training, and employment of teaching assistants must not be viewed merely as an inexpensive, efficient, and convenient way of staffing lower-division classes. It must not be viewed as merely an available device of offering financial support to promising future researchers. Above all, it must not be viewed as a necessary evil that deserves minimal effort. The recruitment and training of teaching assistants is the first step in developing the next generation of those who will educate future cohorts of students. If we treat them and their tasks as important and make them discover the significance, the potential, and the excitement of teaching, they may be able to transmit to students the challenge and the pleasure of learning. In the treatment of our teaching assistants we, the senior professoriate, contribute to the apathy, the lack of interest, and defensiveness in the undergraduate classroom. By giving support to the emerging teaching, by legitimizing education as preparation for teaching, we enable the teaching assistant of today and professor of tomorrow to benefit from campus-wide and discipline-based programs offered by those willing to fight an uphill battle.

Enhancing the worth of teaching, endorsing its importance, and stressing the need for learning and experimenting with competence in teaching behaviors provides not only a climate of support and a legitimacy for development, but it also results in improved conditions for teachers to feel in control of their teaching function. Like all human services, the successful practice is an exercise in the skillful use of oneself in the delivery of a service. The commitment and the conviction, the sensitivity and the translation of content into experience are mediated through the delicate human ability to use oneself as subject and as object simultaneously when interacting successfully with others. The teaching assistant deserves no less than to taste the satisfaction of success. To do so, a climate of support and atmosphere of respect must provide the context within which the future teacher can approach and absorb the programs designed to offer preparation and assistance.

Hans O. Mauksch is Adjunct Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Professor Emeritus at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Multiple Perspectives on the TAship: Views of the Developer, the Department Chair, the TA, and the Graduate Dean

Part 1. A Developer's Perspective

Teaching in Higher Education: From Hobby to Profession

John D. W. Andrews

The word "hobby" in the title of this discussion is a strong one, and I am using it here deliberately to make a point. In doing so I do not intend to minimize the endeavors of the many creative individuals who have made important contributions to undergraduate education; but we must also keep in mind that, sociologically speaking, a collection of dedicated individuals does not make a profession, and there is a strong need to think through the institutional structures that are needed if we *are* to have a full-fledged profession.

My aim here is thus a form of consciousness-raising, designed to help us focus on what we are entitled to expect and assume when we are asked to provide teaching training or consultation for teaching assistants. Like most other consciousness-raising efforts, this discussion is intended to highlight a certain implicit inequity or evaluative difference–one that we labor under and generally take for granted, but which is detrimental and should be challenged. I'm referring here to the second-class status that teaching occupies in the priority hierarchy, especially at large research universities. I was happy to hear Ohio State President Jennings emphasize, in his opening address, that scholarship and teaching should be placed on an equal footing with regard to prestige and resource allocation. But on most of our campuses there is much to be done before that equality is truly implemented.

Like most consciousness-raising, too, this message is intended to mobilize constructive anger. In my experience TA trainers and other teaching improvement professionals often accommodate to pressures and limitations that stem from this status inequity, that are not only frustrating but limit the effectiveness and credibility of what we do. I hope that my statement here will come to mind when you encounter such frustrations in your work, and that it will encourage you to take a more active stand against them.

Much of this problem is encapsulated in the often-heard phrase, "Of course you can't *force* people to work on their teaching; we have to minimize the threat and work with those who want to do it." Providing teaching improvement help then becomes a matter of "selling" the idea to faculty and TAs. Now, of course it is a good thing to have a real interest and commitment to learning about teaching; I have held onto enough of my 'sixties values to believe that education in all forms should cultivate such learner involvement. And I spend a good deal of time on my campus endeavoring to create a positive climate for teaching improvement work. The problem with this outlook, though, stems from the overall context in which we operate; it is one in which requirements are almost universal. The educational system on my campus, like most, is built around requirements, and one way to know whether something is considered truly important is to find out if it is required. Anything that is not–that is left up to the interest of the individual–is of marginal value: a hobby, in effect. And you can see where this leaves voluntary TA training programs.

We can bring this point into sharp relief by comparing the expectations and evaluation systems that surround scholarly and teaching performance. At the conference I asked how many members of the audience were affiliated with campuses that had required TA training; a small minority of hands went up. Then I asked how many campuses have PhD programs in which the dissertation is *optional*. Not surprisingly, an even smaller number of hands were raised. This differential requirement structure inevitably casts teaching skill as a second-class citizen. And the same pattern exists with respect to evaluation. Videotaping, or even class visitation, is often objected to because it puts instructors on the spot, makes them tense and renders their performance unrepresentative, and/or is an invasion of privacy.

Yet such assessments are means to ensure quality in exactly the same sense as are faculty critiques of graduate student papers and dissertations. Nevertheless, it is rarely argued that such writing should not be scrutinized, judged, or graded because it might make the student anxious or inhibit creativity. As a campus psychotherapist I work with many graduate students about their conflicts over productivity and their fears about having their talents evaluated. It is plain to me that the requirements and evaluative hurdles of graduate training *do* often seriously inhibit students' freedom to use their talents to the fullest; yet these demands are usually viewed as part of the tough realities of competitive professional life–realities that the student must learn to handle. Against this background, the concern for TAs' and instructors' sensibilities that sometimes emerges around evaluation strikes me as another reflection of the attitude that teaching skill is marginal enough to be dealt with on a take-it-or-leave-it basis–to be treated, in effect, as a hobby rather than an essential professional capability.

In short, I want to challenge the familiar working assumption that it is appropriate for those engaged in TA training to encourage, cajole, seduce, or otherwise induce TAs or faculty to voluntarily engage in becoming better teachers. It may be necessary to operate on this assumption temporarily as a step toward changing attitudes and norms, but the assumption itself is an outrageous one–because it ultimately stems from the double standard of importance that is at the root of so much poor teaching to begin with.

In essence, if you have a profession, and if certain skills are needed to practice that profession effectively and responsibly, you don't make learning those skills a voluntary option! Should a budding surgeon learn the difference between a spleen and a pancreas only if he or she happens to take an interest in those two organs? To adopt such an approach is unfair to the aspiring professional and also the people whom he or she will serve. And the imparting and assessment of essential teaching skills must be embodied in a set of institutional structures that enable us to effectively prepare graduate students who will likely be instructors at some point. Below, I will enumerate these structures and indicate where I think we stand with respect to each. The resulting portrait will tell us how far we have come in our progress from hobby to profession in college teaching.

1. First, professionals-to-be should be selected for their potential to carry out the role. This necessity is almost totally overlooked at present, in that graduate

students are chosen entirely for their scholarly abilities. At the session I took a survey and found only one individual who said his department took teaching potential into account in any way during the admission process. Again, the double standard of importance is in evidence. Until this failing is corrected, we will continue to recruit a population of future teachers among whom the aptitude for effective interpersonal communication is randomly distributed–a matter of pure chance. No other profession operates in this way, and of the course the result is to make our jobs as teacher trainers immeasurably more difficult.

2. A profession also holds a body of principles and practices that are considered to be important and effective in the exercise of professional activity. Here we are in much better shape. The great outpouring of books and articles on teaching in the last decades provides us with a sizable fund of usable tools. And increasingly, as these tools are studied scientifically and the learning process itself is better understood, we should be able to improve teaching practice.

3. There should be procedures designed to help the novice translate the profession's principles into effective practice skills. We are making progress in this area as well; via publications and presentations–such as those taking place at the present conference–we are sharing ideas for training workshop designs, use of videofeedback, and many other methods that can help people to acquire teaching skills. We are even beginning to study the skills needed for *training* teachers, as in a recent research project that focuses on the function of the teaching improvement consultant. Many campuses are institutionalizing such methods in the form of structured TA training programs. As I have already discussed, required training in those skills that are considered essential is also an ingredient in a fully professional system of preparation.

4. Professional training provides a graded series of expectations and tasks that require increasing capability and independence, and eventually lead to assuming a full-fledged role. For example, seminar papers lead to a master's thesis or other long paper and thence to the doctoral dissertation. Medical students proceed through clerkships to the internship and then to the residency. By contrast, TAs are generally assigned roles that are primarily attuned to serving the present needs of a course. Occasionally a TA may deliver a lecture for practice purposes, but many activities that are important to the professorial role–such as defining the scope of a course, choosing readings, setting objectives, and establishing the basis for grading–are often inaccessible to the TA right up until graduation. The individual must then learn to handle such tasks on the job as a professor–at which time help may not be available because he or she is now considered to be a fully trained professional!

5. Every profession also evaluates competence at various key points and certifies that the graduates of training programs have met some criterion level of performance. At present, this function is implemented very unevenly. In some academic departments, professors observe TAs' teaching, collect student feedback, and write careful evaluations that become part of the student's dossier. In others, evaluations may be quite perfunctory and based on no more than the TA's ability to discuss subject matter articulately in a professor-TA meeting. Because the TAship is seen as a source of financial support, few campuses use demonstrated competence in any systematic way to award jobs. Such a casual approach to evaluation does not encourage the TA to work hard at developing his or her teaching skill and provides little feedback that would help him or her to do so. To evaluate a TA without collecting first-hand information is like awarding a PhD without having read the candidate's dissertation. This would be considered appalling in the realm of

scholarship, but the equivalent practice is commonplace where teaching is concerned.

6. Finally, the resources available for training must be allocated in quantities that are adequate to the job. On our campus, which provides more resources than most, six contact hours (one-to-one and in small workshop groups) are devoted to each TA's training. This is far less than the time spent in even a single graduate course in one's discipline–a fact that underlines again the disparity in value between scholarship and teaching. One can learn some hobbies in six hours, but any self-respecting profession will devote many hours over many years to training its new members. While of course subject-matter does contribute to teaching effectiveness as well, it is no substitute for the skills of course planning and interpersonal/ intellectual communication. To impart these skills properly will require an order-of-magnitude increase in the funding allocated for the purpose–perhaps 10 or 20 times what is now spent.

In short, we will have a profession of teaching in higher education when we have institutional structures that support these six functions. This is needed even in settings where scholarship is considered the first priority. Inevitably, the balance of emphasis between scholarship and teaching will vary from institution to institution–from the small undergraduate college to the large research university, for example. Moreover, it is the latter that turns out most of the PhDs and that also tends to stress research, thus compounding the neglect of teaching. Yet even when teaching is considered of second priority, it can still be addressed carefully and thoroughly; "second priority" need not be translated into a license to handle training, implementation, and evaluation in sloppy or haphazard ways. We can, even within these priority limitations, develop a fully professional training system for future college instructors. And I think that those of us responsible for TA training can be more effective if we view the scope of our work as including the goal of *establishing a set of effective TA training structures* as outlined above. The result of doing so could be a dramatic increase in the quality and richness of both undergraduate and graduate education.

Part 2. A Chairman's Perspective

Ronald C. Rosbottom

I intend for my remarks to be direct and specific, perhaps useful to what I understand to be the purpose of this conference, namely, to articulate the opportunities and impediments pertinent to the large-scale use of teaching associates for instruction in lower-level courses. I will not address–though I hope you will–the widespread use of graduate students to teach intermediate and advanced courses, nor will I address the use of *undergraduates* to teach such courses. Both practices need careful attention, and should be exceptions, not rules. I look forward to hearing from you–the experts–about what we can do to change the less imaginative aspects of our system. And I commend my colleagues in the Center for Teaching Excellence for having devised this initiative.

A few words to explain from what experience I am speaking. The department of romance languages and literatures at The Ohio State University is one of the largest such units in the country. At present, Ohio State has in effect two language requirements, a two-year high school requirement for entering freshmen (or two quarters of language for those who do *not* have it), and a four-quarter graduation requirement for all arts and sciences majors. As a result, we teach French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish to about 15,000 students per year. I have to find personnel to teach nearly 200 sections per quarter, close to 600 per year. As well, I am presently a member of the university's Special Commission on Undergraduate Curricular Review, charged with restructuring the entire baccalaureate curriculum at Ohio State, and of the Council on Academic Affairs, one of whose tasks is to report on the quality of teaching at our institution. As a consequence, I spend a good deal of time thinking about the TAship. A few years ago, in an effort to answer the problem of declining graduate enrollments in the humanities, we initiated a plan to hire recent PhDs or ABDs from other institutions as term instructors (for one year, renewable twice) to teach nine courses of elementary language per year. Still, this did not solve the problems we had in finding an adequate number of competent teachers. Until about six years ago, the following was true about teaching in our department:

1. Eighty-five percent of our credit-hour production came from elementary language courses, which had an average of 27 students per class.
2. The department admitted as many as 90% of those who applied to us for admission to our master's and PhD programs.
3. Fully three-quarters of the TAs in our department taught two courses of elementary language per quarter (10 hours of class contact per week).
4. As many as 20% of our TAs were from academic units other than language departments, some from such units as agricultural economics and home economics. We hired anyone who spoke Spanish or French.
5. Despite this, we still closed out around 1,000 students a year who wanted or needed elementary language instruction.
6. The preparation and training of TAs, though generally well done, was done informally and sporadically.
7. Graduate students were used for teaching only, and not for research or administrative purposes.
8. Those faculty who had as their primary responsibility the training of TAs and the administration of the elementary language programs were generally considered to be useful (but second-class) citizens.

There have been changes in our department in the last half-dozen years, and we do a better job. However, the system still discourages imaginative restructuring of the TAship. Let me outline how we have *improved* matters, but, in so doing, also point to what we should, *must* do if we are to substantially restructure things.

1. Most of our credit hours still come from the elementary language programs, but we have increased substantially the numbers of our majors and minors, and will soon introduce new tracks that will enable TAs to have a more varied experience as teachers. We have been successful in lowering the average class size to 24.
2. We admit fewer applicants to our graduate programs than we did before, concentrating on their appropriateness for advanced language and literary study, rather than solely on their potential as language teachers. As a consequence, the overall quality *and* retention of our graduate students in French and Spanish has greatly improved. This has enabled us as well to emphasize to our students–and to ourselves–that they are students first, and teaching assistants second, a priority that is very difficult to maintain in large departments such as ours.
3. We remain one of the few departments in the university that still must allow a good number of our students to teach two courses. However, that

percentage has fallen from around 80% to about 20%, and I am committed to reducing it further. Teaching two courses reduces a student's ability to succeed as a student; poor academic performance offsets the two advantages most often cited for allowing students to teach two courses, namely, money and more experience.

4. We have substantially cut our number of "extra-departmental" TAs. Now we hire competitively a very limited number of TAs who are not enrolled in one of our degree programs. As a consequence, the faculty and students of our unit have a greater sense of collegiality and common purpose. As well, by *not* taking in every Tom, Dick, and Harriet, we not only increase the quality of our programs, we have thereby convinced the appropriate administrators that quality instruction demands quality dollars.

5. More careful, long-range (a year in advance!) planning, and more funding have meant fewer closed courses. Nevertheless, this remains a problem for English and romance languages courses.

6. One area of which we are very proud, at least in the College of Humanities at Ohio State, is that of TA preparation and training. About a half-dozen years ago, we initiated a course called "Teaching of (French and Spanish) at the College Level." This is a five-hour course, for credit, with a grade, which begins two weeks before the beginning of the autumn quarter, and is taught throughout that quarter by tenure-track faculty. It is required of all new TAs, with or without experience, though occasionally we do exempt some very experienced students.

7. This year and last we were finally able to begin to assign students as RAs and AAs on a regular basis, that is, to do work for the department or the faculty, for which they receive stipends, but which develop skills other than classroom teaching They serve administratively, as senior interns helping newer students, and as research associates. These appointments are almost universally *in addition to* one classroom assignment, thereby providing extra income, but without increasing the preparation and responsibilities expected of a class.

8. Our department has incorporated into its *P&T Guidelines*, and has encouraged the college to do so as well, specific criteria for colleagues whose specialties and responsibilities lie in second-language acquisition and pedagogy. We have seven specialists in language, tenured or on the tenure-track, at all ranks, including our vice chair. Such commitment has sent a clear message to our TAs that we take teaching very seriously in our department. Despite these collective efforts and palpable successes, there are many problems that a department chair cannot solve, and that his colleagues, in their most generous moments, cannot handle. I will throw out a half-dozen or so of them, and I encourage you and your colleagues to address them in your conference.

1. Too much teaching, especially at large universities or in large programs, is done *completely* by TAs, with little support or supervision, even in terms of curricular organization. Too many graduate students teach during their *first* year of graduate study, an academically unjustifiable practice as a rule.

2. Despite protestations to the contrary, and, to be fair, good will and honest concern, university administrators shudder at the idea of staffing courses with a diminished pool of graduate students. TAs are cheap labor, at least in terms of out-of-pocket dollars.

3. TAs find it too easy–much too easy–to prioritize teaching over studying; as a consequence, they can suffer two deprivations: overwork and lack of attention to their academic careers.

4. Universities have been unimaginative–or fearful–of developing new ways of providing personnel for the teaching of large service courses, aside from the TAship, the "casual" lecturer, and the faculty member. Fiscal constraints and such organizations as the AAUP have strongly discouraged even the discussion of such ideas as a separate, professional, job-secure line for "casuals."

5. Teaching, especially at the university level, is treated far too much as an *art* form (with both the positive and the negative aspects of that nomenclature) and not nearly enough as a set of techniques, capable of precise and meaningful evaluation.

When I was first asked to speak in this conference, I declined, for I felt that we would simply go over the same ground, make the same fervent proposals, and go away feeling good about having set the university on its collective ear. But I weakened, and here I am, if only because I think that the recent attention to the baccalaureate degree in this country may give us an opening through which we can push to resolve our problems. I want to conclude with the observation that these problems fall into two general categories: educational and fiscal.

We–that is, departments and faculties–are, whether we like it or not, responsible for and capable of addressing the *educational* aspects of the role of TAs in the university. Such conferences as this one can help us focus on what we should be imaginatively doing in this area. If we fail to perform, the fault is ours, not the system's.

However, we are singularly inappropriate as a body to address the *fiscal* ramifications of the use of TAs as teachers. (When I address this issue, I want to assure TAs that my concern is not *their* performance, but rather the university's. My plea for more resources is not because TAs are not good teachers, but because we are forced to rely too much on them for instruction.) No imaginative recommendation from groups such as this one will come without a price, and generally a hefty one. It costs money to teach, and we have been teaching very cheaply in this country–especially in the liberal arts–for years. Our legislators, our donors, our boards of trustees, and our academic administrators have become used to our providing inexpensive instruction–and that is the biggest hurdle we have to overcome, not the sometimes sclerotic educational establishment. What I am saying is that it is easier to change the way we use the TAship, despite years of tradition and inertia, than it is to find the money to do so. I include under this general rubric of "fiscal" the redefinition of what a teaching contract means and entails at large universities, and the question of establishing a new, respectable class of university-level teacher that would complement, not detract from, the traditional model of the scholar-teacher, which like the well-known scholar athlete, is a concept increasingly under attack. But we must rely on our academic leaders and managers to be bold in helping us to reformulate the way we teach undergraduates.

Part 3. A Teaching Assistant's Perspective

Abbas Aminmansour

It is a great pleasure and an honor to be given the opportunity to speak to you. I also want to express my gratitude and appreciation to all those who organized and participated in this program. It is certainly very comforting to know that so much concern and attention is placed on the betterment of teaching assistantship. This program is a giant step in that direction.

What I would like to do is to communicate to you some of the challenges and difficulties that a teaching assistant might face, and then offer some recommendations and suggestions as to how to approach these and other issues.

Those who have at some point been a TA may recall how difficult and scary it is the first time they entered a classroom to teach. In some cases this feeling may persist for days, weeks, or even for an entire term. In my opinion, there are several factors that may contribute to the development of such an uncomfortable situation.

First, many departments and colleges do not adequately prepare or train new TAs for the very challenging task that they are to perform. This leaves the new TA virtually in the dark. Not knowing what to do or what to expect can lead not only to sleepless nights, but probably to an unsatisfactory performance in the classroom as well.

A second factor may be lack of confidence in knowing the material. Most departments are very selective in choosing TAs, but the fact remains that a new TA or one who teaches a course for the first time might still be very concerned about this problem. The new TA might worry about his or her ability to answer questions or whether or not what he or she is teaching is correct. This could lead not only to an embarrassing situation, but in my case may cause a bridge or building to fall on someone's head. Although the TAs might be knowledgeable in their fields, it will still take some time for this confidence to develop.

Finally, TAs worry about whether they are going to get the proper recognition and be able to establish their authority in class. Unfortunately, in some students' minds, the title TA has a negative meaning. Not only do some students not take teaching assistants seriously, but at times challenge them on many issues as well.

In my opinion this problem is more crucial than most others. One might gather experience and confidence with time, but is very likely confronted with a new group of students every semester, some of whom will say as soon as they walk into the classroom the first day, "Oh, no, not another TA." This attitude is unfortunately more strongly directed toward female and foreign TAs.

What can the departments do to help improve this situation? For one thing, a well-planned and implemented preparation or training program should be helpful. This may be in the form of videotapes, booklets, a short session a few days before school starts, or a combination of these. Requiring new TAs to take a course on teaching may be fruitful later, but is not practical at the beginning of the term when it is probably needed the most. New TAs should be warned about some of the difficulties they may be facing. They should be reminded that problems may arise from time to time, and that this does not necessarily indicate that they are doing poorly or failing. They should be told that others in the department are there to assist them. They should not feel embarrassed or uncomfortable to ask questions about their subject matter or discuss their problems with others in the department.

Departments should also monitor the performance of their TAs in an appropriate manner. I would like to emphasize that this is a very delicate issue and should be handled with care. As it is, a TA may feel a little uncomfortable in class, and the presence of the department head or another observer from the department is not going to help any. I for one would certainly not like this. Asking someone from your school's instructional development program to do this could be just as, if not more, effective. I have done this several times in the past and have found it very helpful. One thing that should definitely be avoided is to give the students the impression that someone is checking up on their TA.

Another positive step is to encourage those TAs whom you know are doing well. This may be done by a few words carefully put together, or by selecting a TA each year as the best in the department and putting his or her name on a plaque in the department office or lobby. Of course I suspect a monetary reward would be welcome as well! On the other hand, those TAs who seem to be having problems should be helped in an appropriate manner depending on the nature of the difficulty they may be facing.

As for international TAs, I believe it is fair to establish minimum language requirements for those teaching assistants whose native language is not English. After all, the TA is there to be a teacher and, if he or she is not able to communicate knowledge to the students effectively, what is the purpose of having one? Being an international TA, I must say that, although I realize that language could be a barrier to student learning, unfortunately sometimes other problems are ignored and emphasis is put on this single issue. That is not fair. A teaching assistant who speaks English very well but is not a good teacher, or cannot communicate the material to the students efficiently, is just as ineffective as an international TA who cannot speak the language. In short, it takes more than just good English to be a good teacher. A good TA or other teacher should have a good knowledge of the subject and be able to communicate this knowledge to the students effectively. This of course requires being able to speak understandably, be enthusiastic about the work, and make a constant and ongoing effort to improve his or her teaching. After all, there is no such thing as a "perfect teacher." There is always room for improvement.

And last but not least, please give us a raise!!!

Part 4. A Graduate Dean's Perspective

C. W. Minkel

In preparing for my participation in this conference, I sought to determine when the teaching assistantship phenomenon first appeared in American higher education and then to identify the major features in its evolution from date of origin to the present time. This proved to be a somewhat futile endeavor, since assistantships apparently were not initiated on a single date, as was the case of Yale University conferring the first PhD degree in the United States in 1861. Rather, it seems that almost since the beginning of time, some individuals have offered instructional services for pay, while they themselves pursued a more advanced level of education. At the University of Tennessee, for example, our first known master's degree was awarded in 1827. However, the recipient had been receiving payments as high as $250 per academic session for teaching and for work as a tutor since 1823, when he had received the bachelor of arts degree. It appears that he held what might now be called an "assistantship." I regret that I cannot quote from Plato on this subject. However, a small book published by the University of Iowa in 1931, commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of its Graduate College, does offer interesting insights and philosophical perspectives worthy of careful consideration. Included is the following reference to the "service of graduate students":

> One of the most striking aspects of the graduate situation is the coming in of the graduate assistant, the research assistant, teaching fellow, etc. This is naturally a salutary situation for several reasons. First, these services are in the nature of apprenticeship and constitute most excellent training if limited in scope. Second, if pay for service rendered may be regarded as a form of subsidy to students who need it, this is a commendable form. Third, the nominal stipends, legitimately nominal in view of the apprenticeship, furnish to the university a most economical type of service, relieving staff members from routine chores which can be done just as well by the apprentice or assistant. This is true both in teaching and research. (Ashton, 1931, pp. 28-29)

In a chapter entitled "Looking Forward," this same book recommended:

> That the present policy of employing graduate students for service be continued and enlarged and that it be guarded particularly as to the needs of these services, the qualification of the appointee, and the limitation of the assignment to such as would constitute training in apprenticeship. This type of appointment should not be confused with service in ordinary labor, and these appointments should not be made until after the student has had at least one year of graduate work. (Ashton, 1931, pp. 51-52)

Had the nature of graduate assistantships been preserved essentially intact as thus described more than a half-century ago, I believe there would be few problems related to TAs and that we probably would have little need for a national TA conference at this time. However, problems have arisen, and it is our responsibility to address them effectively.

Following World War II, enrollment in American colleges and universities expanded in an unprecedented manner. Included was a rapid growth in graduate enrollment, and in the use of graduate assistants, along with new graduate programs and new graduate degree-granting institutions. Unlike graduate education in Europe and in most other parts of the world, that in the United States became mass education, heavily oriented toward coursework and classroom instruction, particularly at the master's degree level. A decline in concern for the individualized, tutorial, apprenticeship type of instruction at any level was perhaps inevitable.

Specific problems that occurred in relation to the instructional assignment of TAs include:

1. The use of international graduate assistants who lack mastery of the English language;
2. The use of graduate assistants who have no experience in teaching and who are given no pedagogical instruction;
3. The use of graduate assistants who have completed little, if any, graduate-level training in the discipline in which they teach;
4. The use of graduate assistants who lack interest in teaching or who are unsuited for it in terms of personality; and
5. The placement of TAs in complete charge of undergraduate courses, without guidance or supervision.

The problems, however, are not limited exclusively to instruction. They relate also to recruitment, appointment and reappointment, level of stipend, equity of work load, and professional recognition. Not uncommonly, graduate assistants are delayed from graduation because their services are "still needed" by the department with which they are affiliated. Outstanding international students may be encouraged to remain in the country permanently, thus contributing to broader concerns such as "brain drain," and ignoring the legitimate interests of their home country or sponsoring agency.

The reasons that such problems have arisen are not difficult to identify in times of severe budgetary constraints, heavy faculty teaching loads, pressure for increased research productivity, and shifting enrollment trends. More complex is the search for solutions, although prompt action is required. I believe the latter should include the publication of clearly defined institutional policies on the administration of graduate assistantships, close monitoring of graduate assistantship utilization, the provision of training programs for TAs, language testing and instruction, involvement of graduate student associations in the identification and resolution of problems and, above all, close cooperation between departmental, collegiate, and central administrative personnel. Public discussion, such as we are having at this national TA conference, likewise cannot fail to help.

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John D. W. Andrews is Director of Teaching Development Programs at the University of California-San Diego; Ronald C. Rosbottom is the Chair of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at The Ohio State University; Abbas Aminmansour is a graduate teaching assistant at The Pennsylvania State University; and C. W. Minkel is Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, University of Tennessee.

Effectively Utilizing TAs in the University

Robert E. Powell

The university derives many benefits from the teaching assistantship system. These include the direct support value to the graduate student, instructional value to the university (especially when compared to having large numbers of part-time faculty), fiscal value to the university, and active conduct of scholarly and creative work. In this paper, I will examine two of these benefits and the attendant problems. In particular, the topics of having support for the graduate student and of using teaching assistants instead of part-time faculty will be discussed.

To set the tone, let us listen to some commonly heard statements concerning teaching assistants. These are statements that come from different constituencies (students, parents, faculty, deans, provosts, presidents, controlling boards (often with the guidance of presidents), and legislative representatives), all with different understandings and complicated agendas.

1. "I'm sure glad we have all those teaching assistants. Without them, how would we ever teach that horde of mathematics and English classes?" (heard from departmental chairs and collegial deans)
2. "We need more graduate appointments. How do you ever expect me to be able to continue to conduct my research?" (heard from faculty)
3. "It sure is expensive to offer graduate instruction. The more appointments we have for graduate students, the more cost we're going to have to the university." (heard from the central administration and controlling boards)
4. "More problems with those TAs teaching. If it's not the foreign students having problems with English, it's the TAs' lack of interest in teaching." (heard from departmental chairs, faculty, deans, students, parents, controlling boards, legislators)
5. "If we had improved stipends, we could attract better graduate students." (heard from departmental chairs, faculty, graduate deans)
6. "The more TAs we have, the more the professors are going to want to be doing their own thing (research) and teaching the undergraduates is going to suffer." (heard from students and parents, nonacademic administrators, controlling boards, legislators)

We each must deal with many agendas! The graduate deans (who also have agendas) tend to become the focal point for these varied agendas since they often control the monies and, certainly, the graduate programs.

There needs to be an understanding as to why we offer stipends and tuition scholarships to prospective graduate students. A graduate dean's reason may be quite different from those reasons given by others in the university. Graduate deans want to provide incentives to the most outstanding of our graduate applicants to come to our university to study. We need to enhance our pool of graduate applicants both in numbers and in quality. The stipend and the tuition scholarship (partial fee remission or whatever you call it) is intended to give the prospective student partial financial support to attend graduate school and to be part of our institution. It can only be through having the finest students attend that our faculty can provide the seminars and special topics sessions needed for their creative curiosity as well as to have the ongoing intellectual stimulation necessary for the health and well-being of the university's environment.

Clearly, we cannot have an active graduate student body without providing funding for graduate study. A great deal of this funding is found initially in teaching assistantships and often later in research assistantships. We offer stipends at the outset to prospective graduate students and expect, in return, a service commitment to the institution. Since this commitment *must* be intended to better the professional growth of the graduate student and must assist in the mission of the institution, it is often in the form of instruction. Frequently, one hears that using teaching assistants causes degradation in instruction since their primary interest is in their research.

It is my contention that there is no room for the statement that there is either teaching or research, i.e., teaching *versus* research. Undergraduate instruction flourishes by having well informed teacher/scholars presenting ideas. Knowing where the subject matter can lead not only is important in our upper level and graduate courses, it is important in our basic undergraduate instruction. These teacher/scholars can be in the form of our faculty or our teaching assistants or, perhaps, part-time faculty. I will leave this as a possibility since each of our institutions has become party to the use of part-time faculty for a variety of reasons–some valid academically and others driven by fiscal concerns and student demand. (Sometimes such demand is imposed upon us by outside agencies–as an example, some state agencies have insisted that the state's colleges and universities be responsible for remediation of high school graduates upon their entry into higher education rather than placing the responsibility for basic learning with secondary education.)

Certainly, a graduate student needs the instruction and mentoring, as well as the opportunity, to learn to present ideas before a critical audience. Also, many of our institutions could not begin to pay the bills if we had to hire full-time faculty to teach all of our basic courses. Utilizing teaching appointees for basic instruction requires that we provide the appropriate environment for teaching advising (as well as, of course, the traditional academic advising). This is a problem–our ability and interest to provide academic advising is problematical. Why would we delude ourselves into the thought that we would do better at advising with respect to the teaching function? Whatever the current situation in your institution, we must address the function of instruction by our appointees (I guess that is one of the reasons we are meeting here in Columbus). To call upon an already overworked faculty to provide teaching advising is, perhaps, not advisable. While we want faculty to pursue research and creative activity, be effective teachers, be academic advisors, share in the governance function, and monitor the curricula, we must ask ourselves, in our euphoria of a teaching assistantship conference, "How do we establish the environment for effective teaching?" There are no definitive answers except to suggest that this question needs to remain paramount for each of us.

Let us explore a different teaching problem–the situation of utilizing part-time faculty–and compare the possibilities of the academic effectiveness of this ploy versus that of increased numbers of graduate appointees. Let me state, at the outset, there are good reasons and situations for the use of part-time faculty members. The most important that comes to mind is using persons with special expertise (from, perhaps, business or industry) to provide us with instruction and involvement in technical or professionally applied areas of interest–areas of interest for which we choose not to have permanent faculty expertise (which is either too expensive or in areas for which there is not a body of knowledge causing the need for permanent experts on the faculty). For example, having a person address the concerns of forensic geology may well be outside the expertise found in our geology department while it is a hotbed of concern in the industry of oil exploration. To present this material to our students, there would be good reason to hire a lawyer whose specialty includes land and mineral rights as a part-time faculty member for one semester. These situations provide the smallest number of part-time faculty members for most of us.

The largest number of part-time instructors often are found in our attempt to provide entry level instruction or even remedial instruction in such topics as mathematics or English. Two years ago at my institution, the mathematics department had 32 full-time faculty members, about 40 graduate appointees (mostly teaching assistants and some research assistants), and 48 part-time faculty members! One needs to attempt to understand the impact of this type of configuration in program integrity, discipline-currency, and uniformity in single course expectations. While the part-time faculty members are well intentioned, they often come to the campus, teach their course, and leave. Attempts at advising, holding office hours, keeping up-to-date knowledge bases (there may be some question as to the need for this when teaching the very basic concepts in mathematics or English composition), and program control (maintaining concurrence with a syllabus, for example) often are improbable if not impossible. What can be the answer?

If we utilized teaching assistants instead of part-time faculty in these instances, we would accomplish having persons who: (a) are well-informed and discipline-current, (b) regularly interact with the permanent teaching staff, and (c) are citizens of the department and of the university and thus have an additional commitment to their efforts.

In general, the questions that need to be answered with respect to utilizing additional teaching assistants include:

1. Are we (the faculty) providing the teaching advisement and environment to encourage effective instruction by our teaching assistants?

2. Can our academic program take on additional graduate students (which would result from additional teaching appointments) responsibly–both from an instructional standpoint and a discipline demand?

3. Does this make sense fiscally to the university?

If these three questions can be answered positively, then there is no doubt that using teaching assistants in these instructional situations will provide a much healthier situation for the university.

The use of teaching assistants can, given the correct environment of scholarly pursuit and instructional excellence, provide the institution with an enhanced graduate student body and a dedicated cadre of enthusiastic instructors–instructors who are discipline-current and who are an integral part of the department's faculty. By monitoring this instructional effort and providing appropriate mentoring, the basic instructional mission of the university can be well served through this system of utilizing teaching assistants.

Robert E. Powell is Dean of the Graduate College at Kent State University.

2. Conditions of TA Employment

Introduction

The dual role of the teaching assistant as both student and university employee creates conditions that make the teaching assistant particularly vulnerable. TAs are continually "walking a tightrope," as Thomas Gething and Marilyn Baker indicate. As students, they need to reserve time for their studies and avoid overinvesting in their teaching. Somehow, though, they must at the same time not appear to be less than totally dedicated and obedient employees in order to maintain cordial relations with their employers, who may someday be sitting on their graduate committees. They would like to be able to feel confident that their support will continue through their entire program, yet they need to be willing to accept employment that may depend on course enrollments, funding, and a host of other uncertainties. As employees, they would like to exercise their rights and benefits. As students, they know that they are in a particularly vulnerable bargaining position.

The papers in this section are unanimous in stressing the importance of anticipating problems before they occur. The examples that are cited portray how inconsistent decisions, vague and shifting agreements, and unwritten policies are often at the core of tensions that develop over TA working conditions. In their papers on policy, C. W. Minkel and Judith Craig emphasize the importance of written policies and provide examples of the kinds of issues these policies should address. Among these are selection criteria for TAs, renewal or discharge procedures, workloads, stipends and tuition waivers, grievance procedures, and training and evaluation.

Gething indicates the importance of having comparative information in order to make informed decisions on these issues. In these papers, Baker, Gething, and Lawrence provide that kind of information for other universities to consider. As a group, the papers make it clear that cutting across these issues are considerations dealing with equity and locus of authority and responsibility.

Equity

Should TAs in different departments receive the same pay? Should TAs all teach the same number of course sections? Should all TAs be guaranteed a certain number of years of employment? How should TA appointment decisions be made? Should the same form of evaluation be used for all TAs? Such equity issues are at the heart of many of the TA policy decisions that have to be made. Baker, in her review of grievance cases, finds that complaints about inequalities in hiring and renewal practices, as well as inequalities of workloads, are the most frequent source of tension. She recommends that explicit criteria for employment decisions be set and that workload expectations be clear. Craig, Lawrence, and Minkel all emphasize the importance of a formal letter of appointment that outlines specific conditions of employment.

Locus of Authority and Responsibility

Ensuring that equity is preserved involves addressing the question of departmental autonomy vs. centralized decisionmaking. Craig describes a system of checks and balances that seems to go against the traditional respect at her university for departmental autonomy, but has become a necessary part of the collective bargaining environment and uniform policy enforcement. Carlson foresees an additional threat to faculty decisionmaking in the Wisconsin case, which may place responsibility for bargaining on certain issues with a state-level negotiator who is not from the university. For Lawrence, the oversight on conditions of employment and even the nourishing and developing of TAs is an obligation of the graduate school, one that it must discharge in order to both encourage and monitor departments.

In many ways, the authors suggest, the environment within which TA policies and procedures are formulated and implemented has become increasingly more formal. "Gentleman's agreements" present problems, both interpersonal and legal, in current university-TA arrangements. In reviewing the collective bargaining scene, Carlson predicts that such formality may extend beyond the TAship as the ranks of new faculty include more and more former TAs with collective bargaining experience. The authors stress that universities take a proactive stance in identifying their individual needs for policy and enforcement in advance of serious problems.

–Nancy Chism

The Formulation of University Policy for Graduate Assistantship Administration

C. W. Minkel

Throughout this national TA conference we will be discussing the problems of graduate assistantship administration and how to address them effectively. On the basis of some 15 years of experience as a graduate dean, I am strongly persuaded that the publication of a comprehensive institutional policy on each of our respective campuses would be most useful. The mere discussion of such policies helps to identify salient issues and to generate ideas as to how we can function in a more effective manner. When a set of official guidelines is available to all concerned, the likelihood of improper or inequitable practices should be greatly reduced. We at the University of Tennessee do not yet have such a published statement, but we are working through our Graduate Council to produce one in the near future.

In 1980 I initiated a survey concerning the conditions under which graduate assistants are employed at 56 major universities in all 50 states. It omitted any reference to levels of stipend, since these are included each year in a variety of other surveys. Rather, emphasis was placed upon goals and objectives, definitions, procedures, rights and responsibilities, and general philosophy. A copy of any published statement or document was requested. Responses were received from 46 institutions, or 82% of those contacted. All but four respondents provided printed materials concerning graduate assistantship appointments, and about one-fourth provided formal published handbooks.

This survey of policies and procedures employed across the country revealed a wide variety of practices and helped to confirm my belief in the need for more uniform codification of the entire spectrum of conditions related to graduate assistantships. The results of the survey were tabulated and analyzed to develop a model policy for graduate assistantship administration, which has been endorsed and published in booklet form by the Tennessee Conference of Graduate Schools (Minkel and Richards, 1983).

The model policy asserts that programs of graduate study are designed to transform the individual from student to professional scholar. When a graduate assistantship is well conceived and executed, it should serve as an ideal instrument to facilitate the desired transformation. The primary goal of an assistantship, then, is to aid in the prompt and successful completion of the graduate program. As an employee, the graduate assistant is expected to meet teaching, research and/or administrative obligations but should at the same time be provided with supervision by experienced faculty and receive in-service training. The concepts of "apprenticeship" and a "student-mentor relationship" must remain central. The assistantship should be carefully planned and monitored to assure that both the student and university derive maximum benefits from the relationship.

The types of assistantships offered by American universities are highly varied, as are the titles assigned to them. Teaching assistantship, research assistantship, and administrative assistantship are but a few of the better known types. It is important that each type be sharply defined and that the conditions pertaining to each be clearly presented.

Qualifications for appointment to an assistantship should include the possession of an undergraduate degree, with substantial work in the discipline involved in the teaching assignment. The recipient should be fully admitted to the graduate school and to a specific graduate program, and be devoting full-time effort toward the degree. An excellent academic record is a prerequisite and should be maintained. A thorough command of the English language is essential to international and domestic students alike.

Appointment procedures will vary among institutions, and the terms of individual awards may vary from department to department on a given campus or even within a single department. However, each assistant should be given a formal letter of appointment providing full information on the terms of the assistantship and, in effect, serving as a contract.

If a graduate assistant fulfills the conditions of initial appointment, he or she should normally be assured of reappointment in successive years up to a prescribed limit. This provision may at times conflict with departmental efforts to recruit new and better students each year but will protect the diligent assistant from being left abruptly without means of financial support. Likewise, it is reasonable to expect that some increase in remuneration will accompany each year of successful service and reappointment.

If graduate assistants are to make steady progress toward the degree, the course load and assistantship responsibilities should form a totality that facilitates progress rather than hinders it. Ordinarily a graduate student will hold only one assistantship at a time and will not engage in other employment. There will be some maximum and minimum registration limits established to assure an appropriate course load each term. Graduate assistants should not be allowed to teach courses carrying graduate credit, nor to enroll in courses for which they are assigned assistantship responsibilities.

Graduate assistants are obligated to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity, and these standards should be specified. Likewise, since they are preparing for professional careers, they should be made aware of the facilities, services, and support mechanisms available to help achieve that objective.

The graduate assistant should be notified in writing of all decisions that affect his or her academic or employment status. This includes advance notice of evaluation procedures and a summary of the evaluation. A formal grievance procedure should be established and made known to all graduate assistants, with the channels or stages of appeal clearly outlined. Counsel from within the university should be encouraged, whereas external legal counsel should not accompany the graduate assistant during the appeal process. That is, opportunity should be provided for academic judgment and procedures to resolve academic problems within the academic community.

It is important to recognize and to emphasize that no model set of guidelines will be applicable in detail to all institutions. Rather, the assistantship policies will vary according to the nature, tradition, and needs of each university. Yet some formal policy will aid all parties involved with graduate assistantships toward the goal of quality education. It will also lessen the cause for external concern and the potential for outside intervention.

Reference

Minkel, C. W., & Richards, M. P. (1983). *A model policy for graduate assistantship administration.* Tennessee Council of Graduate Schools, Publication No. 4.

C. W. Minkel is Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Tennessee.

University-Level Policies for TAs: Experience at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Judith S. Craig

This talk addresses the question of university policies for TAs from the experience of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with emphasis on how our existing structure was developed, what it includes, and what kinds of pitfalls we have encountered that should be planned for if not avoided.

To begin with, a word about our university structure. The College of Letters and Science (L & S), of which I am a part, is the core college in a university that consists of 10 schools and colleges. We have some 16,000 undergraduates in the college, and beyond that offer service courses for students in other colleges such as engineering, business, and agriculture. We are responsible for some 60% of the undergraduate credit hours on campus. While other schools and colleges also employ TAs, we have by far the greatest share of them; in a typical autumn semester we might have 1,200 of a campus total of 1,600 TAs. There are 41 departments within L & S that use TAs, and in keeping with our general mode of operation, the selection, training, and supervision of teaching assistants is highly decentralized.

Our stipend levels are set on a campus-wide basis; an "experienced" TA (one who has two semesters of experience) who holds a half-time appointment is paid $10,831 for the academic year. From that, the student pays in-state tuition: $266/semester for a "dissertator" (ABD); $1,128/semester for a full-time pre-ABD student. TAs also have access to the health care plan available for faculty and other staff at low or no cost (depending on the plan selected).

Origins

Our current campus policy document, *Teaching Assistant Policies and Procedures*, has its origins in the upheaval of the late 1960s. Like many large universities, we experienced a high level of student unrest. Also like other universities we found a considerable amount of discontent with their role among graduate student teaching assistants. These problems were explored in a number of studies in the late 1960s.

At Madison, a number of factors in 1966 caused the chancellor (our chief officer) to appoint a committee to study the TA system and recommend changes and improvements. This committee, called the Mulvihill Committee after its chairman, included three TAs and an undergraduate student representative, with faculty drawn entirely from L & S. The committee report recommended a number of steps it thought would improve TA ability to function effectively and improve the interrelationship between the teaching experience, the graduate student experience, and the training of future academics. Among these recommendations were improved training and supervision of TAs; an opportunity for all students–including the very best, who often were supported by fellowship or research assistantships and did not teach–to have some teaching experience; closer contact with faculty in planning courses, and better specification of the responsibilities of TAs so inconsistencies in pay and work expectations across disciplines were reduced. One of the most important recommendations was that TAs should be guaranteed that with good progress toward the graduate degree they should have three to four years of support.

As it happened, the report was presented to the chancellor just the week before the so-called Dow riots, which involved personnel recruitment on campus, and attention was diverted toward more pressing matters. The Dow riots were also a factor in galvanizing a group of graduate students who were organizing a union, which subsequently pressed collective bargaining as a means of addressing problems of TAs on campus as well as the ills of society as a whole. The university agreed in 1969 to bargain collectively with this group, the Teaching Assistants Association (TAA), and a contract was signed in the spring of 1970 that incorporated many of the proposals made by the Mulvihill Committee.

The history of that collective bargaining relationship is complex, and has been studied elsewhere. For the present topic, it is sufficient to note that the collective bargaining relationship was terminated by the university in the spring of 1980, and that the university then needed to develop a set of procedures to replace the contracts that had governed appointments during the previous 10 years.

In typical fashion, the university moved to do this through a series of committees. During 1980-81, the first year after collective bargaining, each school or college having any TAs was asked to form a committee to review the ways in which TAs were employed in the college and to recommend to the respective deans (and the chancellor) the important elements that ought to be in the TA policies. The following year, a campus committee was appointed to develop and recommend a set of campus policies, and in the third year a committee drafted the policy language itself.

Contents

In setting up a structure to replace the contracts, the university undertook to correct some of the most troublesome aspects of the collective bargaining structure. Chief among these was the centralization and inflexibility that had robbed faculty of their ability to control their academic decision-making at the department level. While they recognized that some elements of the TA appointment needed to be set at the campus level, they wanted to be able to reflect, within their own departments, those elements that were peculiar to their own disciplines and programs. Thus a "governance" structure was a key element to the proposal. The university also undertook to restore a measure of the apprentice flavor and collegial emphasis that had been missing in the contracts.

The centerpiece, then, of the campus policies is a set of committees–one in each department or program appointing TAs, one at each school or college level, and one at the campus level. In fact, the first chapter in the policy document is titled "Committee Governance Structure." All committees have a faculty majority and TA participation. At all levels the committee functions as an appeal body for grievances about TA appointments. Generalized policies have been developed and adopted at the campus level; it is the function of the campus committee to monitor these policies, act on requests for departure from them, and to recommend changes. College-level committees may set (and review requests for departure from) policies appropriate to the college, so long as they are consistent with campus policies; they may also recommend to the campus committee changes to or exemptions from campus policies. Departmental committees "may develop and recommend to department faculty general policy relating to teaching assistants that is consistent with existing collective and campus policy"–matters such as:

- Criteria or recommendations to be used in the selection of TAs;
- Types of TA appointments;
- Number of TAs allocated to, or types of appointments used by, different components of departmental teaching programs;
- Appeals by TAs of assigned duties;
- Recommendations of class size appropriate to specific courses; and
- Training/orientation of TAs.

The committees proposing these structures, after soliciting advice and input broadly, also wanted to be sure departmental committees busied themselves with TA policy, not TA personnel matters or general graduate student or academic policy, and that the *TA Policies and Procedures* document identify items not considered to be policy under the jurisdiction of departmental committees, for example:

- Assigning particular TAs to specific courses;
- Making specific decisions on appointments and workloads of individuals;
- Determining methods of evaluation of TA performance within individual courses; and
- Criteria for satisfactory academic progress and "other purely academic matters that pertain to all graduate students."

An important element of the new policies, given the faculty concern that centralized policies had not allowed them to reflect aspects important to their own departments, was the provision that, "Where needs of the department or program can't be met within the framework of existing college or campus policies, the department or program may request a change in the scope or specificity of the higher level policy. Such a request shall be made first to the school or college committee."

To assure compliance with the general policies and some campus oversight and consistency, it was important, the document drafters felt, to provide an opportunity for formal proposals to modify the policies. One important departure has been approved; I will discuss that later.

What do the policies contain? This is indeed a philosophical statement about what a teaching assistantship is and should be, but it has a definite practical composition. Aside from the governance structure, the following are the chapter headings:

- TA appointments (guarantees of support, appointment criteria, letters of appointment, minimum and maximum appointment levels, English proficiency, sick leave, etc.);
- Class size and instructional responsibilities (a somewhat euphemistic term for workloads);
- Educational planning;
- Orientation, supervision, and evaluation of TAs;
- Discipline or discharge;
- Grievance procedure; and
- Appointment resources, environment, and conditions.

Basically, the policies lay out a framework covering TA appointments and a procedure for TAs to use in raising questions or complaining about any aspect of their employment.

Procedures

The following description of procedures for carrying out the policies relates primarily to L & S. In applying the policies, one of the challenges is to be sure that all TAs are aware of the conditions of their appointment. The policies call for an annual appointment letter, but through the years we found it increasingly necessary to review with meticulous detail the contents of these letters–otherwise, they omitted relevant and important material, contained factual errors and unwise statements, and often were not even sent. At first we issued instructions about a wide variety of details that needed to be included, but the length of this "boilerplate" finally caused us to distill parts of *TA Policies and Procedures*, add information on stipends, dates, etc., and produce at the college level a several-page document, "Teaching Assistantships in L & S," which must be included annually with each appointment letter. We then provide sample formats for departments for the accompanying letters they must send, and tell them that they are free to construct their own but must be sure to include a number of specific points (the type of appointment and length of continuing support guaranteed, reference to any probationary period, appointment level and hours of work expected, dates of service, tuition information, etc.). We ask to see a sample of each letter type departments plan to send. Despite departmental indications that they plan to use our sample intact and can skip our further review, it is regularly the case that departments make a minor change or "insignificant" omission or addition that would (I speak from experience) create all sorts of problems if not changed, so we continue to insist on college level review.

A campus-level procedural approach, which we endorse although it runs counter to our usual attempt to minimize unnecessary paperwork at the department level, is to require departments to report each semester the enrollment in each TA-taught section. We now have a maximum of 24, with a provision for exceptions to the maximum to be approved by the college committee. (These must be defended on pedagogical grounds as well as in terms of the effect on TA workload, and they do get closely questioned.) While it probably would be possible to gather this information on TA enrollment from the computer, there would be problems of accommodating complex data (the computer may not know, for example, that a professor and a TA jointly lead a section). More importantly, even with regular reminders of the clear policy, departments often forget it or dismiss its importance. Requiring them to provide the report helps focus their attention on the policy and helps to correct some potential problems before they become real. The information is regularly requested by the TAA, and despite its lack of bargaining status at this time, under our open records law it does have a right to ask for the information.

Stresses

Setting aside the usual sorts of budgetary and priority setting stresses, these policies do provide some conflict between departmental autonomy and college/campus authority. For example, the requirement of comprehensive offer letters is a constant irritant. Particularly with recruitment of new graduate students, departments want simply to send a short congratulatory note with the very basic details (stipend level, at the most basic). They regard the material we want included as likely to offend those they want to attract.

Another sore point is the class size limitation, although the provision in the policies that allows advance approval of a higher limit for some courses has improved the situation a great deal. (I might parenthetically note the lack of logic here: One of our departments recently had a section taught by a former TA who decided not to continue graduate work, and to return to her home country at the end of the academic year. She was appointed as a "faculty assistant"–a nonstudent title–but several weeks into the semester discovered visa problems meant she would have to return home immediately if she were not enrolled. She reenrolled and her status was changed to TA. At registration time, however, the department had allowed 26 students into her section. When her status changed, the enrollment became a violation of policy, and corrective steps had to be taken.)

One of the more important conflicts came over the matter of long-term support guarantees. The contracts had provided for a four-year (or three-year for students already having one year of graduate work) guarantee to the large majority (about 80%) of teaching assistants. At the end of collective bargaining, most departments wanted to continue this provision, but several small departments argued they should either be exempted or be allowed to give shorter guarantees. Locking up the few–one or two in some cases–teaching assistantships their departments might have by guaranteeing them to the same person for three or four years prevented others from having an opportunity for the teaching experience and financial support. While they argued for a change at the time *TA Policies and Procedures* was being written, the university was reluctant to make a drastic change in such an important feature. What was done, however, was to write the provision noted earlier that allowed a department to propose a change, and to note in the introduction that:

> These policies and procedures are intended to provide sufficient flexibility in the implementation process and in the governance structure to preserve the important principle of departmental responsibility for educational programs. If a department . . . discovers a conflict between any specific provision of these policies and procedures and its educational requirements, and if this conflict cannot be resolved internally, the department or program can propose to the . . . College Committee on Teaching Assistant Policies and Procedures . . . an alternative in keeping with the principles on which these policies and procedures are based.

Just this past spring, three years into the *TA Policies and Procedures*, one department did convince both the L & S Committee on TA Policies and Procedures (CTAPP) and the campus CTAPP to allow it to make two-year guarantees, on a trial two-year basis.

Other problem areas include the precise definition of teaching responsibilities in such a way that they can be translated into an expectation of a number of hours over the semester (a problem between the individual faculty member and department as well as between department and college), and the evenness with which academic and other procedures are expected to be applied.

In all these areas, the essential conflict has been that individual faculty members–and departments–have lost some of their ability to make decisions and act exactly as they wish, and are instead constrained to fit their wishes into a campus-level framework. On the whole, however, the policies have worked well.

The types of activities carried out by the L & S CTAPP during the past two-and-one-half years may be of interest. Its attention was first devoted to setting forth procedures for requesting class size variations, and reviewing and acting on proposed exceptions. These included, in part, laboratories that may have been equipped for 25 to 30 students and where, in the past, perhaps two TAs had supervised a lab. They also included, however, such special situations as orchestra or choral rehearsal sections led by a TA.

In its second year the committee undertook to survey all department training and orientation efforts, to gather a clearinghouse of information so that departments could make use of the ideas and materials used in other disciplines, and to set forth elements that should be included in a department's training and orientation efforts. Because of the diversity of our departments–in size, mission, and ways of employing TAs–the committee was reluctant to mandate a particular program. With the committee's support and blessing, the college developed a *Manual for TAs*, which has been given to all beginning TAs, on the nuts and bolts of serving as a TA in our college. The college committee has also heard one grievance–a time-consuming and stressful endeavor–regarding workload expectations in an elementary foreign language class and the difficulties in sorting out those responsibilities from the student responsibilities associated with a course in pedagogy being taken concurrently by the TAs.

Judith S. Craig is Associate Dean at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Fostering and Monitoring TA Development: What Administrators Can Do

Joyce V. Lawrence

The university-graduate student relationship is an important one, and the university role is often enacted through the graduate school. Graduate schools are responsible for many of the processes that surround the graduate experience, but the one that I believe is of paramount importance to our discussion today is that one in which the graduate school and the student enter a partnership. This partnership must be mutually beneficial to both parties. I am speaking, of course, of the teaching assistantship. The graduate student becomes the employee as well as the student, and the university becomes the employer as well as the mentor. Both have high expectations, and with good cause. The university expects good teaching and a sufficiently high level of concern for the undergraduate students; the TA hopes to motivate the undergraduate students and to present his or her material in a careful, sensitive way.

The reciprocal relationship that should develop between and among all parties–the graduate student, the university, the graduate school, and the undergraduate students–often does not work as positively as it might. My thesis is that the graduate school can often serve as the agency that brings this reciprocity to a mutually beneficial relationship. Unfortunately, this relationship, like many others with which we are familiar, will not happen without careful planning and concern on the part of graduate school administrators. The fact that we all believed in the need for a national conference of this kind probably attests to the fact that we have not provided the careful planning and implementation of what we already know about this very special relationship that should occur in the teaching assistantship.

There are several themes that need to be developed by those who are concerned with academic affairs at the graduate level. First, let us explore the need for *orientation*. Although graduate students are older, more mature, and somewhat more sure of themselves as adults and students than are the undergraduates, it seems to me that we often expect them to adjust to the new situation with little or no introduction to the social milieu in which they find themselves. Although they may be quite familiar with the institution, especially if they were undergraduates there, we need to be sensitive to the totally different environment they face as graduate students. This is particularly true for those who enter the world of teaching assistants. This need for orientation comes at a particularly difficult time–the time when undergraduates, new faculty, and old faculty as well–need some orientation to the new year. Some of us in academe would rather not be concerned with orientation, but I want to make a case for a planned program with significant people from the campus involved at several stages. There are a number of good orientation programs going on around the country that we learned of last December at a Council of Graduate Schools' meeting; in February, the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools also planned a workshop around this theme.

A second theme we need to mention has to do with *plans for job performance*. In many universities this task falls to the department, but I want to suggest that the graduate school needs to assist in the planning and implementation. The evaluation process, in particular, should be monitored by a university-wide unit. As the employers of graduate students, it seems to me we have a responsibility to the employees to have their work looked at critically and fairly from the university perspective. Although the evaluation primarily belongs with the department, we in the graduate school need to know that the evaluation is being handled in a way that is mutually helpful to the student and the university. We recently conducted exit interviews using a structured format for a select group of assistants. Results showed that students undergo quite different sets of experiences in spite of general guidelines that should be applicable for all.

A third theme that is important to this topic is that of providing *support and service assistance* to the students. We need to be sure that graduate processes are clearly and uniformly disseminated, and we need to make certain that the graduate school is seen as an advocate for students. We have a role to play in protecting the rights of students and we are particularly accountable, it seems to me, for specific items that protect our graduate students. Since many of our schools are not unionized, the set of circumstances surrounding employment is different for some. Contracts need to be clearly worded; student hours and responsibilities need to be limited. This support and service function should be apparent to the student.

The graduate school secretarial staff should be helpful and friendly but firm. Staff do students a disservice when they suggest ways to beat the system, or give false impressions about their ability to second-guess the administration.

In the relationship we are recommending, the TAs will first and foremost recognize their supervisor, the faculty mentor who will be assisting and guiding; secondly, the role of the department chair should be clear. At that point, the TA needs to know of additional support and the advocacy role that the graduate school may need to play in the event of difficulties or misperceptions.

Another way we can look at the idea of support for TAs is through our concern with their well-being. There seems to be a real need expressed across the country for workshops on time management, stress, parenting, and survival in graduate school, to name a few topics. The development of support groups and networks to help meet these needs can be facilitated by the graduate school. Certainly the graduate school is not the unit on campus usually charged with this kind of support service, but I do suggest that psychological well-being seems to correlate rather highly with our major concern, academic success. Although some of you may well argue that we simply have not been hired to become involved with matters such as these, I believe your presence here indicates concern for graduate students. I want to propose that the graduate dean of 1986 and beyond must be *concerned* about the students. As Harold Hodgkinson (1985), futurist author, tells us:

> We are just entering an era in which youth will be in short supply in America . . . for the next 15 years at least, we will have to work harder with the limited number of young people we have to work with, whether we are in higher education, business or the military. If a young person fails the first time, we may have to help them succeed the second time rather than summarily replacing them. They will be scarce for a long time–as long as we live, there will

> be more people over 65 than teenagers in America. How do we balance the interests of both?

Now that we are cognizant of these three themes related to TAs, the *need for orientation, plans for evaluation, and support and service assistance*, we find ourselves quite naturally at the second focus of our panel topic: *What can administrators do?*

If we can "buy into" the ideas I have mentioned, there are seven things that can be done by administrators to assist in the fostering and monitoring of the TAs' development. They are:

1. Administrators can encourage *diversity* in graduate education. Specialization can occur in the discipline, but the education of graduate students should reach out and include a broader range of experiences.
2. Administrators can ensure *fair and equal treatment*. They should serve as advocates when needed, and monitor conditions of the contract and employment.
3. Administrators can monitor *quality of teaching*, not in the primary role that is reserved for the faculty supervisor, but in a generic way that speaks to the broader university of evaluation and ways that we can achieve excellence in teaching.
4. Administrators can assist TAs in keeping the "*big picture" perspective* and encourage participation in a wide range of activities and experiences.
5. Administrators can serve as the *appeal agent* for TAs. By recognizing their role outside the department and the discipline, an administrator may take the role of an ombudsman for the student, or assist in according due process.
6. Administrators can influence the *evaluation process* at the departmental level by providing standard reviews of work performed, and allowing for open-ended critiques of student teaching performances.
7. Administrators can demonstrate their concern with the psychological *well-being* of TAs by providing assistance for activities and workshops as needed or desired by students. The initiation of these activities can come from the graduate school or some other university-wide unit, but should be developed for the broad range of graduate students.

In summary, we emphasized the reciprocal nature of the TA experience and relationship, reminding all of us that a good experience for TAs means better learning for our undergraduates as well as enriched learning for the graduates. As administrators and employers, we recognize the value of an effective and caring environment for our employees. As academic administrators, we recognize the value of effective leadership in our classrooms and know that this leadership cannot be left to chance. We must accept our part of the responsibility for educating graduate students; the challenges and the opportunities are present on every campus.

Reference

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Joyce V. Lawrence is Dean of Graduate Studies and Research at Appalachian State University.

Employee or Student? Walking the TA Tightrope

Part 1. Stipends and Workloads

Thomas Gething

In this part of the "answer" to the question posed in the title, five aspects of the TAship relating to stipends will be examined. These are: (a) setting of stipends; (b) adjusting stipends; (c) using a standard rate as opposed to variable rates; (d) setting workload and dealing with overloads; and (e) national data on stipends.

Setting of Stipends

The historical record in my office is silent on how the first stipend scale was set at the University of Hawaii. However, in recent years we have consulted our colleagues extensively and annually on the setting of our TA stipends.

We talk with department chairs, graduate field of study chairs, representatives of the Graduate Student Organization (GSO), and academic deans. In addition we must deal with our central administration budget office and with two vice presidents (one for academic affairs, the other for research and graduate education). There is, therefore, a large constituency that must be contacted when stipends are reviewed.

Our stipends are pegged to a scale that includes two ranks, one for master's level students and one for doctoral level students. This system corresponds to our general view of TAs as students, rather than as employees, by relating the entire compensation program to their degree status. In addition to the ranks in our stipend scale we have two steps, which are basically seniority steps. For the first year of an appointment the TA is at step one, for the second year (and thereafter) the TA is at step two.

The dollar amounts in the stipend scale are related to other types of compensation for individuals with instructional responsibilities on our campus. So that, in this regard we also view TAs as employees. We have maintained a close parity between TA compensation and salaries of beginning instructors at the university, because qualifications for advanced TAs are quite similar and duties are roughly equivalent in some cases to first-year appointees at the instructor rank.

We also relate our stipend scale to the national picture in general and to what is happening at peer institutions. To the extent that we are able to glean information from surveys conducted nationally and regionally we try to keep pace with overall trends in compensation of TAs.

Finally, we look at the national economy and the inflation rate for the prior year and take this factor into account when we conduct our annual review of stipends.

Adjusting Stipends

Given the reality of the economy in which we all live, stipend adjustments within memory have been increases, not decreases. In this regard we have held that

TA stipends should be raised at the same rate or same approximate percentage as the faculty. Making a case for this type of increase has been the responsibility of the graduate dean's office with the help of the members of the GSO's standing committee on compensation. We find that graduate students themselves can be very effective proponents of stipend increases and, even though their numbers are small, some are willing to join us in this effort. For the most part this argument must be made, because we are a state institution, to our legislators.

When approaching members of the legislature we try to identify TAs who are residents of the state to do most of the presenting of our case. It has been our experience that voters are more likely to be heard than nonvoters in the legislative halls. Indeed, we encourage our active GSO representatives to establish rapport with individual legislators early in the session, so that allies can be gained in our campaign for stipend increases.

In addition to the graduate dean and the students, our faculty senate each year has been very helpful in appearing before the legislative committees in support of graduate assistant stipend increases.

Standard Stipend Rate or Variable Rate

The point need not be belabored that a stipend scale that has a set rate for the various steps regardless of discipline is easier to administer than one that varies by department or discipline or even individual appointee. The standard rate saves a great deal of time that would have to be spent in negotiating.

At Hawaii the graduate dean has traditionally had substantial influence over the processing of appointment contracts for TAs and a standard, set rate has been the order of the day. We find that it corresponds to our view of the assistantship as a type of student financial aid. Moreover, we regard teaching (for TAs) and research (for RAs) as a valuable part of graduate education, so that the assistantship is a type of apprenticeship. Finally, we have subscribed to the position that no degree program is inherently more valuable than any other, hence we do not value an assistantship in one discipline as deserving of higher compensation than such an experience in another discipline. Indeed, we have a standard tuition rate for all of our fields of study, so a standard stipend rate is not inappropriate.

Some of our graduate chairs have raised the issue of competition in the recruitment of students in a national market. In certain fields of study the dollar value of the assistantship can assume a prominent role in the overall package of attractions that a campus offers. However, we have continued to hold to our policy of a standard stipend rate and have not yet seen a program dip below the enrollment "critical mass" because of the level of the stipend alone.

To a limited extent, alternatives to the typical half-time assistantship exist on our campus. Overload appointments are possible in some fields. In addition, we allow departments to split a TAship into two "halves" that carry waivers of only half of the applicable tuition. However, a department may then request a waiver of the remaining half of the student's tuition under the dean's tuition waiver program. The result is an enhanced half assistantship.

Workload and Overload

The question of what constitutes a typical workload for a TA seems to have been answered on many American campuses in the same manner. The classic assignment is a 20-hour-a-week average workload, from the orientation period to the end of the final examination period. Within that span of 20 hours the TA will have been involved in preparation outside of the classroom, classroom activities, advising and consultation, and grading of papers and tests.

When students resign or are terminated before the end of their duty period it has been our policy to stop their bimonthly pay checks and, if the termination is early in the term, to require that they assume responsibility for their tuition costs.

On the matter of overload we have enunciated a policy to our departments that extra work should not be assigned or offered to TAs. Because we regard the assistantship as financial aid, a commodity in short supply on our campus (or at least not adequate to help all who are deserving and worthy), we discourage overloads. Instead, we recommend that departments that have additional teaching needs hire other students to perform those tasks. The typical TA is fully occupied with his or her half-time student status and half-time teaching responsibilities. Note that we require all TAs to be enrolled in a graduate degree program to be eligible for appointment as an assistant.

When a department chair asks for an exception to our overload policy we require a justification that must explain why the particular individual is the best and *only* person available for the appointment.

It should be noted that the provisos on overload do not apply in the case of summer school teaching, because this falls outside the academic year. Moreover, TAs are not prohibited from performing extra work during vacation breaks in the year.

National Data

We have found it extremely helpful to refer to our peer institutions and their experiences or to the national situation, not only in the area of stipends and workloads, but in all aspects of the administration of TAships and RAships. Comparisons are instructive to those of us who are in the graduate dean's office and they can be useful in making our case when dealing with offices above, below, and beside us on our campuses, not to mention the legislature.

Limited comparative data on TAs are now available, but the quality, currency, and comprehensiveness of these data leave much to be desired. As a result, a group of us have approached the Council of Graduate Schools with a request that it establish a databank to provide better information than we now have. In early 1987 further discussions on this will be taking place, and we have been assured that the outlook is quite good for the creation of this resource to which we all will want to contribute and upon which we will want to call from time to time.

Part 2. Grievances and Taxes

Marilyn J. Baker

I am going to discuss two of everyone's favorite subjects: grievances and taxes. We like to think we do not have to deal with these issues when it comes to teaching assistants, but we find that there is no way to avoid them.

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Grievances

It would be nice if we did not need any kind of grievance procedure, but obviously, human beings being what they are, some mechanism for students to appeal unhappy or unfair situations is necessary. Students need to know that they can appeal even if the procedure is seldom used. In addition, not everything can be handled by an individual faculty member or a department chair. Because TAs are in fact performing duties and receiving pay, they need a procedure that is at least comparable to what employees have available to them. We hope that the collegial relationship that is the hallmark of TA/faculty affairs is strong, but when it breaks down–as it inevitably does–we need to have some way of rescuing the victims.

There are many ways to develop a good grievance procedure, and these vary from institution to institution. I would recommend, however, that you not use the student grievance procedure already in place or the faculty grievance procedure. The former ignores the fact that these students are in a unique employment setting, and their grievances often are around issues of pay or work duties. The latter ignores the fact that they are, after all, graduate students and therefore much more vulnerable than faculty members when they go through a faculty process. I would recommend that you work with your existing student or graduate student organization on campus or a committee of faculty members and TAs to develop a workable but simple procedure.

The USC procedure is quite simple. It involves informal appeal through the faculty member to the department chair, then a formal letter to the chair. If matters cannot be resolved at that level, the student often comes to the Graduate School, where we try again to resolve things informally. For obvious reasons, we try to avoid the formal procedure whenever possible. In those rare cases where it cannot be avoided and where the student is willing to proceed, the dean of the Graduate School appoints a three-person faculty committee from other departments on campus who interview both the student and the faculty member in question, review any pertinent written documents, and make a recommendation to the dean of the Graduate School. The dean then makes the final decision, from which there is no appeal. Obviously, we try very hard to honor the wishes of the TAs at every step in the process since they are extremely vulnerable. Most of them, as will be seen, choose not to pursue the formal process to its end.

In reviewing the actual grievances that I have seen over the last three years, I note a certain pattern. The majority of grievances involve complaints about excessive workload, failure to reappoint a student to a TAship due to favoritism or otherwise unclear appointment criteria, or sexual harassment. Of the five individuals whom I know have complained, only one followed through with the entire process. One was a sexual harassment case where a phone call and meeting with the department chair at least alerted the department to a potential problem. The student declined to pursue the complaint. In another case, a student complained about an excessive workload. Again, phone calls to the professor involved and the department chair resulted in the TA's being reassigned to a different professor for the future and in the department's being asked to reduce the work assigned to future TAs. In a third case, a student failed to be reappointed to a TAship due to poor teaching evaluations. Again, a phone call to the department chair clarified that there were in fact valid reasons for the failure to reappoint. The student declined to pursue the matter. Another case of complaints about excessive workload involved a student who believed he had an agreement with the department chair to be paid extra for extra work. In this case, phone calls to the department chair were unsuccessful, and the student went so far as to take the first step in the formal grievance procedure, which is to write a letter to the department chair formally asking for restitution. He received a scathing letter back from the chair declining to make any compromise. At this point, the student decided that pushing the matter further would only damage his future graduate career. The fifth and final case involved a student who complained of, again, failure to be reappointed based on favoritism and prejudice. Phone calls to the professor and the department chair yielded no compromise. A formal letter from the student to the chair yielded the same response. This student, unlike her peers, did choose to pursue the formal grievance and a faculty committee was appointed to resolve the matter. They found on the side of the student and recommended pay and tuition remission for the student, over the department's objections. The dean upheld this decision. Parenthetically, the student did later receive her master's degree. If she had been a PhD student, I do not know if she would have made it through.

What conclusions can we draw from these five brief case studies? Only one out of five completed the formal grievance procedure. Four out of five, in my view, had valid complaints; only two out of five had satisfactory resolutions. One cannot help feeling that no matter how good the formal procedure is, it just does not work very well given the vulnerability of graduate students and the difficulty of resolving these often rather subjective and personal matters. I do not have any recommendations for a better procedure. I just urge you not to put too much faith in the process.

Let me turn briefly to the question of how to avoid grievances. First, get departments to clarify TA responsibilities and rights so that there are fewer questions about what is expected. Second, educate faculty on the standard policies that the university may have; you might be surprised how few faculty members actually know what the university, or in some cases even the department, expects of TAs. Third, encourage each department to define and publish its own statements on TA workloads and the criteria and procedures for appointment and reappointment, to the extent that these differ from standard university policies. Make sure that these are disseminated to all prospective TAs. Finally, urge students to raise complaints early in the process, and make sure there is an easy, nonthreatening way for them to do that. Many of the complaints that I see have gotten so far, or are so long after the fact, that there is little that can be done.

Taxes

I am going to spend just a few minutes to summarize briefly the current tax issues related to TAs, since these are also employment issues. The new Tax Reform Act takes effect January 1, 1987. Essentially, every TA who receives a stipend for services performed will have to pay tax on that stipend as of this date, even if teaching is required for the student's degree. This is mitigated by the fact that the tax rate for 1987 is only 15% for most TAs, and the standard deduction and personal exemption have been increased. The more serious issue is tax on tuition, which appears to be fully taxable under the new law. This obviously hits private institutions much harder than public, though public schools do have to worry about the matter of nonresident tuition. Obviously, a lot of students will not be able to afford to go to graduate school if they have to pay tax on the dollar equivalent of their tuition benefit as well as their stipend. Many of us believe this was not what Congress intended, but so much for good intentions. It is what the law says.

What are your options? I have identified six and I am sure that there are others.

1. Ignore the effect on teaching assistants and start withholding on the dollar equivalent of their stipend and tuition, effective January 1. This may work in some institutions where these amounts are not high, but obviously, for many of us this is not a viable option.

2. Increase stipends to cover the additional tax liability. Besides being very costly to the institution, this has the added disadvantage of increasing the student's tax liability every time you increase the stipend. Catch-22.

3. Treat teaching assistants as employees. Under section 127 of the new law, employees may deduct up to $5,250 in tuition benefits from taxable income. There are some conditions that must be met to take advantage of this benefit, but it is certainly one that should be looked at seriously if tuition at your institution is low enough to fall under this cap. Please note, however, that this exemption expires December 31, 1987, and we do not know whether it will be extended. It may be a temporary measure at best.

4. Separate the tuition benefit for TAs completely from their assistantship appointments and offer it instead as scholarships. This in fact seems to be the most workable long-term solution, but it requires genuinely separating the funds so that graduate students receive scholarships based on their academic merit without any requirement that they be TAs at the same time. Obviously, the funds would have to be administered separately, and there could not be a one-to-one correlation between those who had TA awards and those who had scholarships.

5. Make the case to the IRS that tuition benefits are in excess of "reasonable compensation." The wording of the House version of the bill implies that the intent of Congress is only to tax tuition that is given *in lieu of* "reasonable compensation." In other words, tuition that is given instead of reasonable pay would be taxable, but tuition given in excess of a reasonable stipend would not be taxable. If your stipends can meet this test of "reasonable compensation," you may be able to take this tack. It is a risky one because the reference to "reasonable compensation" is not part of the actual law, but only part of the language that was developed for the House of Representatives bill. We will have to leave it to the courts to determine if this was in fact the intent of the law.

6. Set a lower tuition rate for graduate students than undergraduates. This is certainly a possibility, depending on your institutional budget and local or statewide financial constraints. It raises a lot of other difficult financial issues, which I will not begin to go into, but it is a valid option if it is done consistently for all graduate students.

Obviously, much of this is speculative since the IRS has yet to issue any regulations or interpretations of the new law. This is one where we will all have to stay tuned for further developments.

Thomas Gething is Associate Dean of the Graduate Division of the University of Hawaii. Marilyn J. Baker is Associate Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Southern California.

Teaching Assistant Collective Bargaining at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Part 1. An Administrator's Perspective

Judith S. Craig

Graduate assistant collective bargaining at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which was the first American university to negotiate a contract with a unit of TAs, had its origins in a number of factors. Most of these centered around the upheaval of the 1960s. The Teaching Assistants Association (TAA) began in the spring of 1966 when a group of teaching assistants staged a sit-in protesting the draft and their role (in giving grades) in assisting it. In June of 1966, having concluded that through collective action they could perhaps improve their working conditions and their status (role ambiguity was an early and continuing concern), they formed a formal organization. The group at that time argued that it was not a union. It pressed efforts over the next several years to get the university administration to recognize it as representative of TAs on campus, and it worked toward a grievance procedure and rules regarding discipline and dismissal.

Also, in June 1966, the chancellor had appointed a committee to review the role of TAs and to make recommendations for steps that would improve the effectiveness and situation of TAs. The committee (known as the Mulvihill Committee after its chairman) was composed of Letters and Science (L&S) faculty members, three TAs, and an undergraduate. Its report to the chancellor in the fall of 1967 included recommendations for improved training and supervision of TAs; an opportunity for all students (including the very best, who often were supported by fellowships or research assistantships and did not teach) to have some teaching experience; closer contact with faculty in planning courses; and better specification of the responsibilities of TAs so inconsistencies in pay and work expectations across disciplines were reduced. One of the most important recommendations was for TAs to have a guarantee that with good progress toward the graduate degree they would be guaranteed three to four years of support.

As it happened, the report was presented to the chancellor just the week before the so-called Dow riots, which involved personnel recruitment on campus, and attention was diverted toward more pressing matters. A number of faculty and administrators who were active in TA matters at that time believe the lack of attention to the Mulvihill Committee's recommendations was a key factor in the TAA's success, since it aroused a number of expectations that were not met. At the same time, however, there were a number of other factors that contributed to the TAA's ability to gain a foothold.

Generalized student discontent was certainly important, and students at the time were increasingly calling for a role in deciding what would be taught and how. Antiwar opinion was high, and a general antiestablishment bias was also strong. Students struck out at the university as a symbol of society. This climate was seized on by the TAA, which also gathered support from those TAs who were unhappy about their roles as teaching assistants and those who saw activity through the TAA as a way of bringing about improvements in educational quality. The TAA picked up the support of many TAs who had no complaint about their own situation but believed TAs elsewhere needed help; some faculty were also supportive of the TAA. An important boost came when a legislator, unhappy about student dissent on campus and convinced (as were many in the conservative legislature) that out-of-state radicals were the cause, introduced legislation to withdraw the tuition remission given to out-of-state students who held teaching assistantships. The value of this remission was about $450 a semester. This was a serious threat to TAs regardless of their views about society or the war, and galvanized many of them into joining the TAA's effort to fight the bill. The university was also seriously concerned about the threat such legislation would pose to its programs and student body, and the legislation was eventually withdrawn. The threat, and the TAA's activities at the time, gave it an important visibility.

There was no legal framework for collective bargaining for teaching assistants. Legislation had recently been passed for classified state employees (the civil service staff), but unclassified staff members (which, in the university, included faculty, professional employees called "academic staff," and graduate assistants) were not included. By the spring of 1969, the TAA was pressing hard for recognition as a bargaining agent. One of the early organizers said later he thought collective bargaining was necessary in order to consolidate gains made as each issue was raised. In any event, if the TAA were to be recognized as representative, for bargaining purposes, of TAs on campus, it would be necessary to have legislation passed extending collective bargaining rights to TAs, or the TAA would need to convince the university to enter voluntarily into a relationship.

The latter action took place. In April 1969, after the TAA told Chancellor Edwin Young it had cards from a majority of campus TAs asking the TAA to represent them, he agreed to enter into talks to set up a framework for a bargaining relationship. Young was a labor economist by background; he was a tenured member of the economics department and had served as faculty member, chairman, and dean of L & S before becoming chancellor in 1964. He made the recognition decision with an uncharacteristically small degree of consultation with faculty for a campus with an extremely strong tradition of faculty governance. While most observers believe Young's professional background was instrumental in his decision, others also said later he probably had very little alternative to recognizing the TAA, because the campus was a tinderbox at the time–demonstrations were frequent, and the campus police were often called on. The black student demonstrations in February 1969 had resulted in the National Guard's being called to the campus. Young himself said recently that he took the recognition step for two chief reasons: He felt that within the limits of what was possible, he should try letting TAs have a voice in what was happening; the other reason was the tremendous support the university had received through the years from organized labor. He was concerned that TA relationships not interfere with labor relations.

The talks between an advisory team of faculty and administrators and the TAA resulted in a structure agreement, signed in April 1969, and a recognition election held in May 1969, in which 931 of 1,835 (50.7%) TAs eligible to vote voted for the TAA to represent them.

The specifics of the history and development of our bargaining relationship, and what was included in the contracts, is of considerable interest. What is of more general interest, though, is what kinds of issues arose and what kind of effect there was on university relationships and operations.

I will discuss the second issue first. Probably from the time of the recognition vote forward, the TAA was a minority union–perhaps one-third of the TAs belonged. The UW-Madison bargained collectively with the TAA from 1969 through 1980, when it terminated the structure agreement. During that 10-year period there were five contracts, each lasting roughly a year. There were also two strikes (a three-week strike preceding the first contract in 1970, and a five-week strike at the end of the collective bargaining relationship in 1980), and a two-day "work stoppage" in 1976. In addition, each time a contract expired there were strike votes and threatened strike votes, and there was a considerable amount of rhetoric (from both sides) in an effort to gain public and community support. Undergraduate support was crucial in the case of a strike, and the TAA made regular efforts to enlist undergraduates to boycott classes, put pressure on the university, and otherwise support the TAA. The standard statement made by the TAA was that it was the only group on campus that cared about the students and about quality of instruction.

Another "atmospheric" effect of the relationship was grievance activity, which from the very beginning was used as an organizational tool by the TAA. This meant, from the university's perspective, that issues were often manufactured or overblown, and that they were pursued as formal grievances (or as publicized incidents) when they could well have been settled informally. It also meant that grievance activity followed a cyclical pattern, heating up as contracts expired and strike votes were impending, and also as membership campaigns intensified. Specifying workloads in terms of hours, as the agreements did, meant it was necessary to spell out in some detail what was expected for a TA appointment of a particular level in a particular course. This has been a difficult exercise for faculty members, and everyone finds it difficult to translate teaching into clock hours of effort. Nevertheless, for TAs, as contrasted with any other professional appointment on campus, we do continue to try to do so.

Another impact of the relationship was the time commitment. The early faculty bargainers who negotiated the structure agreement recommended that the chancellor hire someone to bargain and administer a contract, since they found it simply took too much time. The university has had four staff members who have taken that primary responsibility; in addition there has been a substantial involvement of a member of the legal staff, and a huge time commitment on the part of university faculty and administrators who make up the bargaining team and the faculty "liaison" committee that oversees development of educational policy positions. To give you an idea of the time involved, during the 1980 strike the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission mediated in an unsuccessful effort to resolve the differences. During a 34-day period, 100 hours were spent in mediation sessions on 14 different days–at a time when extra time and attention was needed to keep the university functioning during the strike. The same type of time commitment was required of teaching assistants as well.

Yet another impact has been the centralization of much of the policy and procedural aspects of teaching assistantships. (I do not want to imply that this is necessarily or completely bad, but it has certainly been a change in our operation.) Dating from the onset of collective bargaining, policies on length and size of appointment, continuation of appointment, class size, criteria for selection of TAs–all are coordinated at a college or campus level, and some are *set* at college or campus level. Departments (in my college, at least) must have all offer letters to TAs approved (they must *send* such letters, which was not previously the case), and they must include a great deal of information in the letters that they would prefer to omit. There are many issues they used to handle (or sometimes ignore) on their own, and they now turn to a higher level to find out what they may and must do.

The university has also found it necessary to recognize public relations and communications problems inherent in managing collective bargaining. Getting information out about what is happening–in bargaining, or in a strike–is extremely important, and a university cannot ignore it. If it does, it learns that the other party *does* make use of the press release, the news conference, and the flyer, and it is frequently put on the defensive with its own faculty members as well as with students, teaching assistants, legislators, and the public.

A university must also set up some sort of structure for administering a contractual relationship. At our university, with its decentralized method of handling everything, this meant a regular effort to inform, remind, cajole, and prod faculty members at the department level to pay serious attention to the requirements of the contract.

One of the impacts most difficult to judge or quantify–but perhaps the most important given the fragile nature of the educational enterprise and the importance of collegiality–is the introduction of an adversarial quality into the relationship between teaching assistants and their departments, supervising faculty, and the university. With all the best intentions this can still happen, and it can be made worse by the attitudes and approaches of bargainers on either side. It is hard to grieve without a supervising professor feeling personally involved. If the supervisor supports the grievant, there may be a deterioration in the relationship between that faculty member and the department chair, or between the department and the college. (There may also be a suspicion on the part of faculty, departments, and deans that a centralized campus bargaining authority or contract administrator does not understand the situation, or wants to settle at any cost. This is another type of adversarial problem.) When department faculty hear their actions being distorted, or their motives made to sound underhanded or uncaring, they become suspicious in further dealings with the labor organization as an entity, and sometimes with TAs as individuals. (I should note, however, that in my experience faculty members strive valiantly to separate the graduate student as TA from graduate student as union member, and on the whole I believe they are successful.)

To some extent this adversarial effect comes from the transient nature of the union membership. In order to keep old members and keep getting new members to replace those leaving, the union needs to show the membership what it is achieving on their behalf. This means enlarged bargaining demands (and it becomes hard not to intrude on faculty "turf") and it means grievance activity aimed at convincing members they need a union to look out for them.

As to participation on a fuller basis in the planning of a course or of a department's program, our experience has revealed a greater willingness on the part of individual faculty members to work closely with individual graduate students than to institutionalize that same participation by bargaining it.

What sorts of issues come up in the bargaining? The first contract settled a number of basic "bread and butter" matters in a way that continued essentially intact through the life of the collective bargaining relationship. Wages were never a bargainable item under the terms of the structure agreement, although that was a subject of some continuing debate. Even without bargaining on wages themselves, there were continued efforts on the part of the TAA to improve wage-related items–to bargain for no tuition payment, for example, or expanded maternity/paternity/adoptive parent benefits, or to extend the terms of nonresident tuition remission and insurance benefits to former TAs throughout the term of their graduate work. A number of these items were simply not bargainable by state statute, so they were not the type of issues that held bargaining up.

Since the beginning of bargaining, the university's contract has provided:

- A minimum appointment level (initially one-quarter time, later one-third);
- A provision that approximately 80% of campus TA appointments in any semester carry continuing support guarantees (three or four years);
- Sick leave;
- An evaluation process;
- Class size limitations for TA-taught sections (not laboratories);
- A specification of how many hours of service are expected at a particular appointment level; and
- A grievance procedure.

Although many of these matters were modified only slightly in the 10 years since the program began, some were the subject of continued attention. The TAA frequently attempted to lower the *class size* maximum, for example, or to bring laboratories under this rubric. Class size was an issue on which the university had difficulty mustering a common position, furthermore. While faculty members in some disciplines–in engineering, business, and computer sciences, for example–felt that their courses could exceed 24 in some cases, and could exceed the set maximum average of 19; others saw any university moves to relax class size restrictions as an administrative plot to raise their own class sizes. This was particularly the case in the foreign languages. There were indeed sections that were routinely held lower than the limits (composition courses were held to 12, for example; some physics and chemistry labs were held to nine; communication arts small group discussions were held to 15 or 16), but either these kinds of situations were lost sight of, or faculty and TAs alike were afraid that a relaxation in the limit would mean inexorable pressure to raise these smaller sections as well. Application of the limits to unusual situations (a TA leading rehearsal sections of a choral or band group, perhaps, or a ballroom dancing class within the physical education department) was also quite difficult.

Grievance procedures, another element of the first contract, were a continuing issue, but more in terms of the use to which they were put (a situation I will mention later) than in the actual terms of the procedure.

The most stubborn issues, though, went beyond these basics. For example *how appointments were made* was a regular issue. Although the TAA said it did not want to take away departmental or faculty rights to select TAs, the pressure to state criteria for hiring, with calls for increasing specificity, and the need to defend certain selections (or more frequently lack of selection), pushed in that direction. Similarly, the TAA persistently argued that "regular" appointments (those carrying long-term support guarantees) should be made to those who had previously served in "LT" (one semester at a time) appointments. This type of pressure focused attention on department reluctance to define performance as less than adequate, while at the same time departments wanted to use teaching assistantships to reward excellence (either as a graduate student or as a teacher) or the promise of excellence.

How and what to teach was also a continuing problem. While the contract provided that workloads be defined, and specified that departments and faculty members were in charge of making these decisions, most of the workload disputes through the years (not all became grievances) turned on TA unwillingness to reduce activities to stay in line with what the department said was required for adequate performance. In part this problem reflected the TAA's political interests in determining course content; in part it reflected a desire on the part of many TAs to have a greater role in educational planning; and in very large part it reflected the problem of whether the university could "pay extra" for the TA who wanted to perform excellently when it had defined workloads in terms of what it took to perform adequately. There are certainly differences of opinion about what the right approach should be to this type of question. The point in a collective bargaining environment, however, is that the ultimate decision on this question may be made by an outside arbitrator, not by the faculty whose responsibility we have assumed course content and teaching methodology should be.

Jurisdiction was also a difficult problem, and indeed was one of the reasons that the collective bargaining relationship was terminated. Initially, the contract was understood by the university to cover those holding appointments as teaching assistants. Grievances, though, challenged whether those serving as graders, on an hourly basis, ought to be called TAs and have contract coverage–a step that would have doubled pay rates and would presumably have extended minimum appointment levels and continuing support guarantees in these cases as well. A more serious grievance charged that the contract should cover students who were trainees, fellows, or research assistants in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS), and expected to do a small amount of teaching at some point during their graduate programs (without being appointed as TAs). This grievance was submitted only for advisory arbitration, because no contract was in effect at the time, but the university also argued it related to an academic program decision not subject to the contract. The arbitrator ruled the university was violating the contract and should appoint and pay the students as TAs and extend terms of the contract to them. (It is instructive to note that graduate students in CALS were virtually unanimous in wanting no part of this arrangement.) The university undertook in bargaining to clarify the situation, but was apprehensive about doing this by contractualizing exceptions because its experience had been that contract language was consistently twisted and undermined in interpretation. Bargaining discussions showed, furthermore, that the TAA was interested in asserting jurisdiction over such practices as graduate student participation in case study format courses, practicum courses, occasional filling in for a major professor, and guest lectures (covering a student's research, for example, and delivered as a part of building experience levels for the graduate student). A satisfactory resolution was never reached.

The desire of the TAA to participate in budgeting decisions was another continuing issue. This was of particular difficulty during times of budget cuts, but even in good times the TAA continually pushed for reallocation of resources among instruction, research, and administration, and charged that the university should reduce its emphasis on research, although that was funded almost entirely by external funds that could not be reallocated to instruction.

The grievance over jurisdiction, mentioned earlier, illustrated the developing concern over how the grievance procedure was used. These two issues–grievance and jurisdiction–combined to bring about an end to collective bargaining. By statute, faculty at UW-Madison have "primary responsibility for academic and educational activities. . . ." Yet the TAA was unwilling to negotiate with the faculty except as they were representative of the administration (the chancellor). Faculty members felt they were very much a part of the bargaining relationship, and in fact had legislated an elected committee to provide a liaison with the bargaining team and develop bargaining positions on academic and educational matters. They were unwilling to relinquish their responsibilities in this area to the chancellor or a group of administrators. Furthermore, faculty and administrators alike saw that the grievance mechanism was being used increasingly by the TAA to gain through grievance and arbitration items it had been unable to gain through bargaining (jurisdiction over those not intended to be covered, for example, and bargaining over wages). The faculty thus articulated positions proposing an extensive university governance clause and an intricate system that would allow binding arbitration only on issues that the faculty agreed were not educational policy questions. These issues were sufficiently unresolvable that a five-week strike (and extensive mediation) ended in TAs' returning to work for the last week of classes with no contract. During the summer, as the TAA prepared to file an unfair labor practice charge challenging the right of faculty to participate in the bargaining process, the chancellor rescinded the voluntary structure agreement on which the relationship was based, and the collective bargaining relationship ended.

The story of course does not end there. There were unsuccessful legal challenges to the university's right to rescind the structure agreement. During the past six years the university has continued to deal with the TAA as if it did represent TAs on campus, in a sort of intricate game. The TAA was successful last year in convincing the legislature to enact legislation extending collective bargaining rights to teaching and project assistants; this law took effect in July 1986, and the TAA has just recently filed a request for a certification election.

An analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of collective bargaining with TAs, based on our experience, suggests the following advantages:

- Departments and faculty were forced to pay more heed to the TA role.
- Evaluation and supervision were improved; a review committee was set up.
- There was a standardization of basic terms of appointment that helped eliminate disparate treatment across disciplines.
- For those who saw this as a benefit, good treatment did not rest on the good will of enlightened administrators.
- Because of the challenges to their authority, faculty were forced to think more carefully about the centrality of their role.
- Departments perhaps gained more clout in extracting things from the dean (telephones required by the contract, for example).
- The grievance mechanism provided a way of channeling and resolving complaints.

But there were flaws, such as:

- Antagonism.
- A problem on the part of the union leadership in deciding what type of union (economic? business? political?) it was. How did it define its role at this particular institution?
- Transient members–no commitment over the long haul to the goals of the institution.

- Transient bargainers with no stability; agreements made at the table by one group were unknown or unrecognized the following year (or even week).
- Transient membership–how do you keep the members happy? What "more" can they get?
- Challenge to departmental autonomy and to the faculty role.
- Centralization; an inability to recognize department or individual TA needs (class size, appointment levels); administrative and professional advisors (labor negotiators, legal staff) making more of the decisions.
- Arbitrators settling academic policy issues.
- Difficulty in handling the student vs. employee question.
- Difficulty in training students to be good teachers (complicated by the contract workload provisions).

Some aspects of our bargaining relationship were complicated by the lack of a legal bargaining framework, and those issues may now be resolved. The complexity we see now, however, is that while previously the faculty and administration at Madison controlled the bargaining, it will now be in the hands of the State Department of Employment Relations (DER). That raises a long and unresolved set of questions, such as:

- Will another state agency be sensitive to the special relationship between TAs and faculty?
- Will it distinguish educational policy from employment issues?
- How will the political relationships between the university and other parts of state government affect the bargaining?
- What role will the faculty play?
- Will the TAs find DER less understanding of their special needs and situation, less willing to make exceptions and overlook rules in student interest, than the university was?
- What will happen when DER bargains a contract the faculty simply will not accept?
- Can DER preserve departmental ability to make qualitative judgments?
- Will DER recognize the unique features of a major research university?

Part 2. A Negotiator's Perspective

Charles E. Carlson

Dean Judith Craig's summary of the bargaining relationship between the University of Wisconsin and the Teaching Assistants Association (TAA) is an excellent, balanced treatment of the events during this relatively brief and interesting period of time.

I think it is important for you to understand the perspective I bring to this topic. I am an industrial relations practitioner and a professional negotiator, and I will speak with you today with a negotiator's perspective rather than as a professor or dean. My purpose is to describe and explain what I see coming down the road for the relationship between our university and teaching, program, and project assistants under collective bargaining enabling legislation.

I joined the staff of the University of Wisconsin Chancellor's office in 1977 to represent the university in its voluntary bargaining relationship with the TAA. From a negotiator's point of view, the 1985 graduate assistants bargaining law is a very clear law in terms of what is negotiable and not negotiable. Because of this clarity, I think graduate assistants and their union would be greatly disappointed by a new bargaining relationship. Before I explain to you why I believe this, I will briefly review the dynamics of the relationship from my negotiator's perspective.

Under the former process of voluntary collective bargaining, the university did its own negotiating, and the faculty was involved in the process both at the bargaining table and by legislatively reviewing contracts. Under these conditions, educational policy was fair game in the bargaining process, and the union gained substantial concessions in the initial agreement in 1970. However, the union did not make substantial inroads into educational policy through the subsequent bargaining process. The gains of the first contract were maintained over time. This was a significant victory for the union.

Trouble started in 1977 when the union found through the arbitration process an opportunity to enlarge upon its gains without having to go to the faculty. This caused the university to call for changes in the contractual arbitration language, and the union went on strike in 1980 attempting to maintain the language. The strike was unsuccessful, with the striking TAs returning to work without a contract. The union then filed new charges demanding the faculty be barred from the bargaining relationship. This caused the university to sever the voluntary relationship and call for development of a new set of rules. The union refused, seeking bargaining legislation instead.

An important historical footnote is a union white paper that emerged following the 1980 strike. Due to the tremendous amount of anger, discouragement, and confusion that existed in the membership over the unsuccessful strike, people from all perspectives wrote their opinions, and the union, being a democratic union and to its credit, published them. It became quite clear from this paper that the leadership had used arbitration in an attempt to access educational policy in the period preceding the strike. Now the union was struggling with what to do next after the university severed the relationship.

On economic matters throughout the bargaining era, graduate assistant wages, or stipends, were not negotiated because the Madison campus did not have the power to determine them. Yet stipends were quite high and have continued to be quite high relative to what graduate assistants typically are paid across the country. Furthermore, Wisconsin graduate assistant stipends have been high uniformly, which is an important point. It is not just that TA salaries have been high in the sciences at the University of Wisconsin, but they are high across the social sciences and humanities, as well. This is contrary to what typically occurs at most universities.

Economically, the collective bargaining agreements did provide most TAs with long-term support guarantees, which also are not typical nationally, and relatively high minimum levels of appointment. These have been continued since 1980 in the absence of a bargaining relationship.

As we head toward a spring election, there are approximately 1,600 teaching assistants on our campus and about 700 project or program assistants. Together they constitute the statutory bargaining unit. At least 30% must petition to obtain an election. Reportedly, a petition with approximately 900 signers, or about 40%

of the bargaining unit, has been filed. If all vote for the TAA, it is likely that there will again be collective bargaining.

The new bargaining relationship would be distinctly different, however, from the former relationship. The major differences are that the university would not be in charge of bargaining with the TAA. Instead, the union would bargain with the governor's office. In addition, the subjects of bargaining would be significantly different than our experience from 1969 to 1980.

The State of Wisconsin takes a very centralized view about how collective bargaining is supposed to work with state employees. During deliberations in the legislature over a graduate assistant bargaining bill, the TAA made numerous overtures to the legislature asking that everything previously negotiated be mandated as subjects of bargaining. The legislature consistently said "no."

Instead, the legislature restricted bargaining scope to wages, hours, and conditions of work as provided for other state employees. This scope of bargaining definition is a critical one. If fact, the legislature has prohibited the governor's office from negotiating over the statutory mission of the state's agencies.

In Wisconsin, the right to determine educational policy is specifically reserved to the board of regents and the faculty through shared governance. Accordingly, subjects like educational planning and class size, over which the graduate assistants union historically has fought with the faculty to share control, are prohibited bargaining subjects under the law. I suspect these are issues that would interrupt the flow of bargaining with litigation.

On the other hand, wages are negotiable where they were not previously negotiated. A major difference is that teaching and project assistant wages would now be negotiated with a governor's office and a legislature who may have different feelings than the university about what the appropriate wage structure ought to be for graduate assistants. Furthermore, if the remission of out-of-state tuition is negotiable, it may be taxable under the recent revisions to the federal tax code.

My experience with the State of Wisconsin's bargaining results from four years as personnel director at our university hospital with 2,000 employees under statewide union contracts. Reflecting on the bargaining that occurred, it is my observation that the state bargains with a centralized view. Consultation with the agencies is generally perfunctory. The state sidesteps this lack of consultation by being very restrictive in what it is prepared to negotiate. It just simply tells the unions the state is not interested in talking about many issues. Wage settlements are uniform across units.

When the university conducted its own negotiations, it was willing to talk about any subject. If you regard talk as bargaining, we bargained. Agreement was difficult, but we certainly talked and negotiated. I believe that if the graduate assistants opt for collective bargaining in the spring, they are in for a rude awakening when they sit down at the bargaining table with the state's negotiators who are unlikely to see a lack of familiarity with the university as being a problem because they do not intend to negotiate about educational policy.

A further development on the Wisconsin scene is that the current bill was signed into law by a democratic governor who was defeated for reelection by a republican minority leader of the assembly. The new governor is conservative and is likely to appoint negotiators who act even more conservatively than previously.

Across the country, there are increasing efforts on the part of universities to advocate against collective bargaining in elections involving university employees. Two elections involving academic staff recently went in favor of no representation in the University of California system. In both elections, the university campaigned against collective bargaining.

I cannot tell you today what position the Wisconsin faculty will take in the preelection union campaign. Faculty have the legal right to speak out on almost any subject. The question is, when are they speaking as the employer's agents, and when are they speaking as independent faculty members?

There are other universities in the United States formally negotiating with graduate assistants. They are Michigan, Oregon, Florida, and Rutgers. When you examine those collective bargaining agreements, it is apparent that terms and conditions that have been negotiated with TAs or other graduate assistants are far more limited than those we have in place unilaterally at the University of Wisconsin.

Analysis of collective bargaining legislation for institutions of higher education across the country indicates graduate assistants at seven universities have established bargaining rights and 15 may have such rights, depending on whether graduate assistants are determined to be employees in separate rulings.

In a recent case, the California Supreme Court decided that residents at University of California teaching hospitals are employees for purposes of the California higher education employee relations act. There is a pending companion case involving graduate assistants that could leave the California University system with enabling collective bargaining rights for graduate assistants any day. I am advised that a State University of New York (SUNY) case is similar.

If this burst of activity results in collective bargaining with graduate assistants at Wisconsin, California, New York, Michigan, and Florida, there will be a substantial number of doctoral students graduating in coming years with significant collective bargaining experience. It would be interesting to hypothesize on its impact on public higher education.

The overwhelming impression that collective bargaining with graduate assistants has made on me is that it is very unstable. In the five years, I worked with the TAA, the union had at least 10 presidents. Each had an agenda to be fulfilled, usually without a realistic view to what could be accomplished. The basic underlying problem is that graduate assistants do not have long-term interests in the outcome of the process.

In fairness, the university was not without problems on its side of the table during the bargaining relationship with graduate assistants. Our problems had to do with what one person has called the multilateral nature of the employer: a large number of participants with a stake in the outcome and legal right to participate. Unlike a private organization where the chief executive officer provides the negotiator with clear instructions, I responded to a chancellor, a couple of vice chancellors, academic deans, and several faculty committees.

The Wisconsin faculty has been relatively quiet on the subject since the legislature voted for graduate assistant bargaining rights. It is too early to predict how the faculty will react to the coming union election. I know in the conversations I have had with faculty in leadership positions that there is great dismay about the state's serving as negotiator for the university.

The University of Wisconsin is concerned about the graduate assistant bargaining law because now the legislature and the governor are directly involved. Collective bargaining is a very centralizing process. The centralizing tendency is threatening to the university faculty because it is contrary to our decentralized shared governance.

If the graduate assistants elect collective bargaining, I suspect that the participatory process Dean Craig described, which was designed to provide TAs access to educational policy, will continue only so long as the union does not attempt to bargain policy matters. Should the TAA follow its traditional agenda of pressing policy issues to the front, it is likely that conflict will result, and the participatory process will be dismantled as the shift to a traditional trade union context is completed. It remains to be seen whether the state as employer will continue the preferred economic status of University of Wisconsin graduate assistants should they choose to bargain.

As a professional negotiator, I am aware of and concerned about the tremendous power vested in a collective bargaining process. In the coming months, critical decisions affecting the University of Wisconsin will be made involving the use and control of that power.

Judith S. Craig is Associate Dean at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Charles E. Carlson is a special assistant to the Chancellor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison serving as an advisor on collective bargaining.

3. Considerations for TA Development

Introduction

Once it has been acknowledged that the development of teaching assistants as teachers is in the best interests of the TAs, their undergraduate students, and the universities and the universities in which they serve, the need arises to develop visions of what forms development programs should take. Among the salient questions that surface are how do teaching assistants learn to teach, what skills and knowledge will TA development programs address, where should such programs be located within the university, and how will these programs be evaluated.

How TAs Learn about Teaching

In exploring issues related to how TAs learn to teach, the first three papers in this section challenge, at least indirectly, the assumption that the development of teaching assistants can be addressed solely by workshops or seminars that present information about teaching or provide recipes for instruction. Papers by Robert Menges and William Rando, Ann Darling, and Hildebrando Ruiz all indicate that the process of learning to teach is rooted in the actual experience of teaching and involves ongoing reflection on the connection between theory and practice.

Menges and Rando, finding that TAs' theories of teaching are related to their classroom behaviors, suggest that helping TAs to make their implicit theories explicit might make them more reflective about their teaching, and thus more able to recognize the variety of approaches they might take.

In her study of how three TAs were socialized, Ann Darling confirms the importance of self-reflection for growth in teaching and finds that the TAs, in seeking advice on teaching issues, relied far more heavily on immediate and informal interactions with their peers than on formal programs that were available to them.

Ruiz argues that providing TAs in advance of their teaching with techniques or "cookbooks" gives them "information that does not become knowledge because many of the TAs are unable to develop a personal relationship with it." Instead, he advocates fostering experiential learning through helping TAs to engage actively in the process of connecting theory with practice as they teach.

The Content of TA Development Programs

In her review of TA development program descriptions reported in the literature in the past ten years, Joan Parrett profiles the approaches that have been taken in the recent past. She finds that most programs are departmental rather than university-wide, and that more are held in liberal arts departments than in the sciences. Most are described as being a combination of pre- and in-service programs, which TAs are frequently required to attend, and for which they often receive some academic course credit. The curricular content of the programs is varied, but over one-third address general teaching methods, discipline-specific instruction, and cognition. Most do not provide significant opportunities for TAs to practice teaching behaviors. Few programs employ needs assessments prior to the program or formal evaluation either during or following the program.

New information that may be used in thinking through the content of TA development programs is available from a national survey of teaching assistants reported in the paper by Robert Diamond and Peter Gray. They find that a majority of TAs report having responsibilities for grading, holding office hours, preparing tests, leading class discussions, conducting review sessions, and lecturing. The survey found that, although TAs are generally satisfied with their supervision and training, many would like more preparation in self-evaluation, course evaluation, using instructional technology, and lecturing.

Locating Development Programs in the Institution

Larry Loeher, John Andrews and Leonard Jossem address the issue of where to locate TA development programs. Loeher speaks at a strategic level, discussing considerations that arise in designing a program that fits the needs, structure, and culture of the institution and is realistic and persuasive with respect to goals, time frame, and resources.

Andrews and Jossem speak at a pedagogical level, focusing on the central question of whether TA development should be general or discipline-specific. Andrews, emphasizing the strengths that both those with extensive general knowledge of teaching and those with discipline-specific experience bring, supports a collaborative model in which individuals of both types work together to plan and deliver programs. Jossem emphasizes the importance of making pedagogical learning relevant to the particular situation of the TA and informed by an understanding of the central concepts of the discipline. He goes on, in a second paper, to describe how professional associations–in this case, those in physics–can help to foster TA development.

Evaluating TA Programs

A complaint frequently raised about programs for TA development is that evaluation is often absent, and when present, is based on anecdotal evidence. Based upon their experiences in evaluating a TA development program, Kathleen Davey and Curt Marion discuss the difficulties involved in evaluating these programs, suggesting that expectations that the impact of such programs can be precisely measured using formal experimental designs are inappropriate. They conclude, however, that valid information and documentation, based on the multiple perspectives of the various actors involved in the programs, can and should be a part of TA program evaluation.

Summary

Together, the papers in this section highlight the important questions that must be considered in planning TA development programs. They question many assumptions that are often made: that the workshop format is the most effective form of helping new TAs develop their teaching; that TA development should be viewed as a matter of conveying teaching techniques; that strong centralized programs for TA development are always desirable; and that evaluating TA programs properly is a simple matter of rigorously applying traditional research designs. As a group, the papers are unanimous in supporting, either directly or indirectly, the idea that careful planning, reflection, and assessment must be connected with efforts to organize and conduct TA development programs.

–Nancy Chism

A Ten-Year Review of TA Training Programs: Trends, Patterns, and Common Practices

Joan L. Parrett

In the welcoming address President Jennings emphasized that "teaching requires . . . clear knowledge." As participants at this first national conference on the employment and education of teaching assistants, a common goal is discovering the training components that will enable teaching assistants (TAs) to achieve that state of knowledge. In this case, "clear knowledge" will be defined as the curricular content reported in TA training programs. Although it is assumed that the training contributes to successful teaching, I am not investigating the validity of that assumption today. That consideration is crucial, and we need to encourage empirical efforts by suggesting training research priorities; designing curricula sensitive to influential TA variables such as amounts of prior teaching experience (Parrett, 1985); and resolving to convene other formal and informal opportunities where ideas can be exchanged and problems solved. But this session will present the program patterns, training commonalities, and format similarities found across diverse institutions and among major academic disciplines.

The author examined teaching assistant (TA) training programs reported in the literature from 1976 to 1986. Names of specific articles are included in the references to this paper. These programs were representative of every type of four-year higher education institution in the United States that employs graduate teaching assistants. The criteria for final inclusion in the summary were: (a) sufficient data to address 80% of 21 items identified by the author, and (b) programs that were not designed exclusively for the international teaching assistant. Thirty-six training programs qualified for the summary. Some interesting historical trends were noted during the literature review: large numbers of TA training programs were reported preceding the chronological parameters of this study–the early to mid-1960s; the number of reported programs rose again between 1977 and 1979, and no TA training programs were reported in the literature in 1985 and 1986. Although this probably resulted from historic parallels, such as the early campus riots for course relevance and later the national demand for accountability, the general dearth of information is to our great disadvantage. Hopefully, the clearinghouse for TA training materials proposed by this conference will provide one method by which we can perfect our skills through the trials and errors, successes and failures of others.

Before considering the summaries, three biases must be acknowledged. Not only have these influenced the results, but they may also explain why relatively few TA training articles have been available. First, depending on the discipline, few appropriate journalistic outlets may be available. Second, with the demand for empirical and scientific research, descriptive training articles may find few sympathetic editors. Third, there are no standard reporting procedures for descriptive practices. Consequently, simple detail omission can not only quickly frustrate another coordinator's efforts to replicate applicable parts of a program, but researchers cannot make adequate comparisons.

There seem to be two causes for these problems: (a) the majority of the reported programs are both discipline- and institution-specific; and (b) most lack evidence of empirical design or even subsequent annual reports. With these qualifications in mind, the data will be presented in 11 summarized categories.

Departmental Affiliations

The departmental classifications of The Pennsylvania State University were used as the framework for classifying the 36 TA programs. When several programs from specific disciplines within a department appeared, the individual disciplines were listed. As can be seen in Table 1, the liberal arts and general science departments offered the most reported TA training programs between 1976 and 1986. The majority of national surveys of TA programs were also conducted in these same departments (Hagiwara, 1970; Kaufman-Everett & Backlund, 1981; Schultz, 1981). There is no way to determine from the literature if this imbalance was due to the previously discussed problems or the reality of program availability. Another distinction must be noted between the liberal arts and the general sciences: TA responsibilities in the sciences are frequently restricted to laboratory instruction

Table 1. Departmental Affiliations

	Total Programs Reviewed (n=36)	
Divisions	n	%
Liberal Arts (total)	17	47.2
Foreign Languages	7	19.4
English	4	11.1
Speech Communication	3	8.3
Sociology	3	8.3
Science (total)	12	33.3
Chemistry	4	11.1
Biology	3	8.3
Physics	3	8.3
Zoology	1	2.8
General Science	1	2.8
University-wide Programs	5	13.9
Business Administration	1	2.8
Engineering	1	2.8
Agriculture	none	
Arts and Architecture	none	
Earth Sciences	none	
Education	none	
Health	none	
Human Development	none	
Interdisciplinary	none	

(Sutter, 1981). An important difference should be noted between two other delivery units. University-wide programs were sponsored by instructional development programs or the institution's staff development office, while interdisciplinary programs were those initiated by several departments in an effort to incorporate multiple areas of expertise and expose TAs with diverse academic majors to other departments.

Curricular Planning

The persons primarily responsible for planning the TA training programs are summarized below. (The number increased to 38 since two programs used two specific methods.) It is interesting that instructional designers and staff development personnel were never mentioned. The relatively small contribution of faculty members may be justified by their high rate of actual training participation. As seen in Table 1, no training programs were offered among several departments, but the literature revealed six programs that included some sort of interdepartmental coplanning. Should we be alarmed at the limited involvement of education departments? Should we be alarmed that only four of the 36 programs incorporated a needs assessment? Of those four, none distinguished between perceived needs or practice-verified needs, and none defined the participants in the assessment–TAs (novice or experienced, American or international), administrators, faculty supervisors, or undergraduate students. The high percentage of nonreported methods may have been significant if this represented underlying attitudes toward either the perceived value of planning or the value attributed to the entire program. The amount of graduate school and interdepartmental involvement may also reflect value indices (Azevedo, 1976; Gefvert, 1982; McGaghie & Mathis, 1977). Also the absence of some other planning considerations may reflect either value attribution or simple detail omission (biased reporting). For example, no one reported evaluating TA background demographics (other teaching experience or completion of other

Table 2. Curricular Planning

	Total Programs Reviewed (n=36)	
Source of Input	n	%
One Program Director	7	19.4
Departmental Faculty Member	4	11.1
Master Teacher	2	5.6
Interdepartmental	6	16.7
with Education Department	3	8.3
Needs Assessment	4	11.1
Experienced TAs	3	8.3
Graduate School	3	8.3
Literature Review	1	2.8
Not Stated	14	38.9

teaching methods courses); no one reported pilot testing a curriculum. No one reported plans for curricular revision after feedback and program evaluations, although seven program descriptions did mention that there were specific plans for program evaluation. Finally, the literature gave no indication of the time required by any program for initial planning or curriculum design and development, which are critical factors for those institutions seeking to initiate a TA program.

Program Classification and Lengths

This category was based on program scheduling. Surveys of campus-wide graduate student preferences were not reported in any of the 36 studies. Conflicting

Table 3. Program Classifications

		Total Programs Reviewed (n=36)	
Type	Length	n	%
Preservice workshops or orientations (total)		7	19.4
	3 half days	2	5.6
	4 days	1	2.8
	1 week	2	5.6
	2 weeks	2	5.6
In-service workshops semester long (total)		14	38.8
Before Teaching	3 hours/week	1	2.8
During Teaching	sporadic	2	5.6
	1 hour/week	4	11.1
	2 hours/week	3	8.3
	3 hours/week	3	8.3
	other	1	2.8
Combinations (total)		15	41.6
Preservice & course	2 days & 1 hour/week	1	2.8
	3 days & 1 hour/week	3	8.3
	2 weeks & 1 hour/week	2	5.6
	4 days & 2 hours/week	1	2.8
Preservice & course	2 days & 3 hours/week	1	2.8
	1 week & 3 hours/week	1	2.8
	2 weeks & 3 hours/week	1	2.8
Preservice, course and other related course	1 week & 3 hours/week	2	5.6
Preservice and sporadic workshops during semester	2 hours & others	1	2.8
	2 days & others	1	2.8
	1 week & others	1	2.8

schedules for TA training and personal academic work force choices. As will be seen later, many training coordinators designed unique program combinations and offered multiple program sections as a solution. Crook evaluated the extensive Campus Teaching Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and concluded: "Most departments want the training for TAs starting teaching in the fall semester, and most TAs want the training to be restricted to the last week or two prior to the start of the semester and the early weeks of the semester (Crook, 1980, p. 111). TAs prefer preservice instruction for several reasons: freedom from personal academic responsibilities allows concentration, TA camaraderie develops, professors and graduate teaching assistants interact without the pressures of undergraduate student responsibilities, practice is possible in empty classrooms, and free time is available to develop teaching materials and collaborate on curriculum and syllabus development (Parrett, 1985). When combined, these develop a sense of professionalism and effectiveness for TAs (Pavalko & Hooey, 1974). If Crook's survey could possibly characterize a national trend, only seven of the surveyed programs completed their entire training prior to classes. Why so few? Some directors cited unavailable graduate housing before classes began and the fear that TAs would expect payment. But on the other hand, what can really be accomplished in three half days? Two week programs were offered by universities only. Only one program required a full semester course that included formative evaluations and supervision. The "ideal" format should reflect the individual university's needs plus their TAs' needs. In place of the ideal, the majority scheduled one-hour weekly sessions run concurrently with the TAs' first teaching semester (N=4). Others experimented with diverse combinations that reflected participants' requests within specific departments. Although these accommodations were made, was participation voluntary or required?

TA Participation

This category included three areas: attendance, credit, and payment. These topics had the poorest report rate and the balance of each category is composed of "not stated." This is unfortunate since these three topics became some of the points of contractual disagreement and final TA unionization (Rogow & Birch, 1984).

Table 4. TA Participation

		Total Programs Reviewed (n=36)	
Area		n	%
Attendance	Required	13	36.1
	Optional	4	11.1
	1 hour	4	11.1
	3 hours	5	13.9
	other	4	11.1
Payment	Yes	2	5.6
	Contractual Expectation	2	5.6

Note: The balance of each category to equal 100% were those not stated.

Thirteen programs required attendance. Does this reflect coercion or incentive? Do those with required attendance also award credit for attendance? There does seem to be a correlation between attendance and credit, but the amount of insufficient data prevented a firm conclusion. TAs want credit. Those hoping to enter collegiate teaching will request and appreciate transcripts, certificates of special training completion, written evaluations from supervisors, and copies of undergraduate student or peer evaluations. These provide a definite hiring edge. Recognition or value ascription by the TA's department or the graduate school in any form–financial, credit, advanced assistantship status, awards for excellence, and even secretarial help–was termed critical by several program directors and TA supervisors (Stice, 1981). Further, this single aspect may affect the graduate instructor's self-concept and teaching behavior more than anything else (Ervin, 1981; Stice, 1981).

Curricular Content

"A large portion of graduate teaching assistants are expected to learn instructional techniques as they teach. . . . [This] method encourages the floundering of many novice instructors" (Kaufman-Everett & Backlund, 1980, p. 343). As faculty supervisors, instructional designers, and administrators, we hope the preceding statement reflects a decreasing percentage of reality across the country. Again, the lack of information prevents an accurate evaluation, but an attempt was made in 1979 by Clark and McLean, who reviewed TA programs for the common instructional areas. Twenty-one training curricula revealed techniques, which included the old audiovisual course, to be the most common (N=13). Instructional objectives and educational theory placed a close second and third (N=6 and 5 respectively). From 70 different topics, this author distilled seven categories: professionalism, TA specifics, instructional strategies, learning and students, general education topics, instructional program aids, and practical opportunities for practice. No program emphasized one category. No individual topic within any category was

Table 5. Curricular Content: Professionalism

	Total Programs Reviewed (n=36)	
Topic	n	%
Department Philosophy or Goals	9	25.0
Course Rationale	8	22.2
Role of the Teacher	7	19.4
University/Department Resources	6	16.7
Ethics and Professionalism	5	13.9
Careers and Job Hunting	5	13.9
Textbooks	4	11.1
Research	4	11.1
Administrative Policies	4	11.1

common to *more* than 12, or one-third of all programs, although three topics were found among one-third of the articles. These were general teaching methods, discipline-specific instruction, and cognition. Therefore, throughout almost two decades, techniques or general teaching skills were emphasized, but there is no empirical evidence to verify the usefulness of the topic's relation to TAs' needs. One training program incorporated a summer reading program to establish a shared foundation for all novice TAs and another had regular examinations to evaluate assistants' knowledge.

Curricular Content: Professionalism

Specific topics subsumed under this category address the development of the teaching assistants' professional self-image and their ability to cope as regular faculty instructors. (Many programs listed multiple topic coverage, hence the total exceeds 100%.) Other informal opportunities included committee membership and attendance at faculty meetings, both of which can establish an atmosphere of collegiality. The topics in Table 5 are also suggested for new faculty orientation programs.

Curricular Content: TA Specifics

Again, several topics in this category were reported by many training programs. This reflected a response to TA demands. Five directors mentioned discussing TA problems, but none indicated available lists of university reference persons, telephone numbers, experienced TAs, or faculty experts to contact when problems did occur. Survival and anxiety included instructional tips and first-day strategies like how to run the copy machine, and suggestions on discipline, where to hide the chalk when scheduled for evening classes, appropriate clothing, and how to have students address the instructor. (See Table 6.)

Table 6. Curricular Content: TA Specifics

	Total Programs Reviewed (n=36)	
Topic and Activity	n	%
Duties	6	16.7
Problems	5	13.9
Interpersonal Relations	4	11.1
Survival and Anxiety	4	11.1
Departmental Expectations	4	11.1
Interchange with Experienced TAs	3	8.3
Personality Test	2	5.6
Individual Conferences with Department Heads	1	2.8
Discussions with Undergraduates	1	2.8

Curricular Content: Instructional Aids

Instructional aids (Table 7) were defined as materials utilized by the training director to facilitate the program. Twenty-four programs did not report any data in this category. One wonders if any supplemental materials were used, yet five articles mentioned that supplemental teaching materials were a requirement in TAs' teaching. Being foundational and therefore only indirectly useful in the teaching assistants' classroom instruction may explain their limited use. The TA manuals and handbooks were of special interest to international TAs. Manuals assist comprehension of the "foreign" American university and provide a readily available expert on which to call. For TAs lacking any previous instructional experience, perhaps descriptive articles on instructional design, models of teaching, and effective teachers would be valuable.

Table 7. Curricular Content: Instructional Aids

	Total Programs Reviewed (n=36)	
Type	n	%
Research Articles	4	11.1
TA Manuals and Handbooks	4	11.1
Departmental Bulletins	2	5.6
McKeachie's *Teaching Tips*	2	5.6

Curricular Content: Learning and Students

The five specific topics within this category related to the TAs' students–how information is processed, undergraduate behavior characteristics, how different persons may approach different subject material, and advising students. One-third failed to report any information. Cognition was one of three topics presented by one-third of all programs. It included teaching study and review methods specific to the subject material, factual versus conceptual learning, and information processing theory. Without undergraduate courses in educational psychology, many TAs find cognition topics fascinating and challenging to their personal learning habits.

Table 8. Curricular Content: Learning and Students

	Total Programs Reviewed (n=36)	
Topic	n	%
Cognition	12	33.3
Advising Students	4	11.1
Learning Styles	3	8.3
Student Characteristics	3	8.3
Student Behavior	2	5.6

Those faculty coordinators and training directors lacking sufficient educational psychology backgrounds could tap the resources of learning center personnel, remedial assistance programs, educational departments, or conduct live interviews between freshmen and TAs to discuss how each approaches learning. Advising and American student behavior were critical topics for international assistants, especially where large universities attract students from a wide diversity of American geographic backgrounds and cultures. If one's curriculum cannot cover sufficient detail, what about informational handouts, transcribed interviews with a departmental expert, voluntary minisessions, class visitations by master teachers, or informal coffee hours?

Table 9. Curricular Content: General Education

	Total Programs Reviewed (n=36)	
Topic	n	%
Discipline-specific Instruction	12	33.3
Review of Educational Research	8	22.2
Behavioral Objectives:		
General Discussion	8	22.2
Composition Practice	7	19.4
Idea and Problem Sharing	7	19.4
General Teaching Discussion	5	13.9
Philosophy of Education	3	8.3
Models of Instruction	2	5.6
Issues in Education	2	5.6
References and Resources in Education	2	5.6
General Teaching Methods	12	33.3
Lecture	10	27.8
Testing	10	27.8
Evaluation	9	25.0
Media and Audiovisuals	9	25.0
Grading	8	22.2
Student Reinforcement	8	22.2
Laboratory Teaching	7	19.4
Discussion	7	19.4
Tutoring	6	16.7
Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI)	6	16.7
Instructional Innovations	6	16.7
Questioning	5	13.9
Problem-solving	3	8.3
Teaching Research Methods	3	8.3
Motivation	2	5.6
Socratic Method	2	5.6
Participation Techniques	2	5.6
Independent Study	2	5.6
Audiotutorial	2	5.6

Curricular Content: General Education

Although Table 9 includes nine areas, this category lacked details. Discipline-specific instruction prevailed in science and foreign language departments where TAs' responsibilities included laboratory instruction. The resource persons mentioned were effective large class instructors, experts in time management, faculty members with similar TA experiences, audiovisual experts, and library and bookstore personnel. No examples of educational research were included. No models for behavioral objectives were common throughout, and no article reported the specific items covered in any of the other topics.

Curricular Content: Instructional Strategies

Twenty instructional strategies were listed among the 36 programs investigated. Of these, lecturing was the most common specific technique after general teaching methods. Descriptions of the general teaching method would have been useful. Those methods involving direct student interaction (discussion, questioning, and participation) attracted little curricular attention. TAs assigned to basic degree requirement courses would find information on motivation and student reinforcement lacking in most training situations. Only three programs reported including problem-solving techniques. Should we be concerned that grading not only fell behind testing, but also that several programs listed one and not the other? Finally, two topics are missing from Table 9: remediation and orchestrating an entire lesson.

Curricular Content: Practice Opportunities

While practice was missing from 10 programs, others reported multiple opportunities. One of the greatest TA frustrations was grading papers. As seen in Table 9, eight programs discussed it, but only one reported any type of practice (Table 10), and no curriculum mentioned any supervisory feedback on the assigned

Table 10. Curricular Content: Practice Opportunities

	Total Programs Reviewed (n=36)	
Type	n	%
Syllabus	9	25.0
Lesson Plans	9	25.0
Textbook Selection	7	19.4
Examinations	6	16.7
Supplemental Materials	5	13.9
Assignments	5	13.9
General	3	8.3
Grading Papers	1	2.8
Audiovisual Materials	1	2.8
Study Guides	1	2.8

grades or rationale used in borderline cases. No class discipline practice was available, such as student teaching under a departmental faculty member. Ten programs lectured on how to lecture, but none provided practice. Nine talked about using media and creating audiovisuals; none providing equipment practice. Does this data imply that for many the first day in an undergraduate classroom is also the practice field?

The literature has revealed some common and uncommon patterns. They may or may not be valid for individual institutions, but they can serve as initial foundations or points of comparison. The responsibilities are great and the possibilities are endless.

Note

[1] The author's dissertation served as a partial basis for this paper.

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Joan L. Parrett is Research Project Associate, Office of Continuing Professional Education Planning Studies, Pennsylvania State University.

A National Study of Teaching Assistants

Robert M. Diamond and Peter J. Gray

The Objective

The teaching assistants of today are the potential faculty members of tomorrow. Unfortunately, there is a general perception that the teaching performance of many teaching assistants is low. In some institutions there is a systematic effort made to orient and prepare teaching assistants for their roles as discussion leaders, graders, advisors, and so on. In other cases, there is no such preparation.

The objective of the study to be reported in this paper presentation was to assess the background, responsibilities, and preparation of teaching assistants from a representative group of research institutions across the country. The outcomes will give us a better understanding of TAs, their roles, and their needs.

Framework

Approximately 10 years ago, Cashell (1977) conducted a survey of 1,000 TAs at Syracuse University. The findings indicated that two-thirds of the TAs lacked any formal preparation in lecturing, preparing tests, counseling students, and leading discussions. More recent studies by Smock and Menges (1985), Bingman (1983), and Wright (1981) clearly indicate that this situation is not unique to Syracuse University nor is it only of historical interest. In fact, a very recent survey of administrators of 400 institutions conducted by The Ohio State University (1986) shows that 60% of the respondents have a "very high interest" in the area of TA employment and education. Furthermore, the administrators ranked "preparing TAs in pedagogical skills" as the most important topic.

Methodology/Data Source

Through the cooperation of eight major research institutions (Oregon State University, Stanford University, Syracuse University Texas A & M, University of California at Davis, UCLA, University of Nebraska, and University of Tennessee), nearly 4,400 surveys were distributed to TAs during the spring of 1986.

The survey consisted of five parts. The first part asked for demographic information about the TAs (e.g., highest level of education, country of origin, gender). The second part concerned their teaching responsibilities (e.g., lecturing, grading, advising) and the supervision provided. The third part of the survey focused on TAs' teaching preparation, including whether they were teaching in their discipline, whether their institution has provided programs of support, and whether they have held any other teaching positions. In addition, TAs were asked in this section to specify the areas in which they have had preparation and those areas where they would like preparation. Section four had items especially for international TAs about: (a) any additional orientation or training that they might have received, and (b) any problems they have had. The last section asked for general comments or suggestions.

The survey form was self-mailing so that the respondents only had to fold and secure the form and drop it in the mail.

Results

A total of nearly 1,400 TAs responded to the survey for a 32% return. Some institutions had as high as a 47% return (as in the case where the survey was distributed with the first issue of a TA newsletter).

More males (59%) than females (41%) responded to the survey. Those with baccalaureate degrees accounted for 43%, and those with master's degrees accounted for 47% of the respondents. Most of the respondents are United States citizens (83%). Of the 17% who are citizens of other countries, the highest proportion (45%) are Asian and the next highest are European (21%). Seven academic departments accounted for 41% of the respondents, although any one department only had four to eight percent of the total.

Sixty percent or more of the TAs listed the following areas of responsibility: grading (97%), holding office hours (94%), preparing tests (72%), leading class discussions (71%), conducting review sessions (69%), lecturing (60%). Supervision of all areas was rated as adequate by 59% or more of the respondents. Supervision of six of the 11 areas was rated as adequate by over 80% of the respondents. Eighty-two percent of the respondents reported that, generally, they have received adequate guidance and supervision.

Almost all the TAs who responded felt that their academic background is adequate for their responsibility (96%). However, only 83% are teaching in their discipline and only 79% say they have enough time to adequately fulfill their teaching responsibility. Seventy-five percent plan to teach.

Some 74% of the TAs reported that graduate support programs were offered. However, fewer than 50% had preparation in such areas as new developments in instructional technology (19%), counseling and advising (22%), course evaluation (41%), self-evaluation (42%), and lecturing (47%). The most requested areas of preparation were self-evaluation (72%), course evaluation (71%), developments in instructional technology (64%), and lecturing (60%).

Many international TAs reported additional training such as orientation for international students (67%) and the role of the graduate teaching assistant (66%). Nearly unanimously, they indicated that they were meeting their teaching responsibilities effectively (93%).

Almost 500 other comments and suggestions were made by respondents. The major categories included the need for more support (20%), inadequate time (16%), and the need for formal training programs (14%).

Further analysis will investigate the similarities and differences among groups (e.g. institutions, disciplines, United States and international TAs, males and females).

Educational Importance

This study provides first-hand information about the backgrounds and experiences of teaching assistants. The information collected as part of this study will be used at Syracuse University to create training programs and materials to help develop the teaching abilities of teaching assistants. Other institutions can use the information as the basis for their own study of TAs. A long-term benefit of the improvement of TAs' teaching ability will be the general improvement of postsecondary teaching since many graduate teaching assistants are bound for college teaching positions.

Note: Copies of the full report of this study are available at $8 each from the Center for Instructional Development, Syracuse University.

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Robert M. Diamond is Assistant Vice Chancellor and Director of the Center for Instructional Development. Peter J. Gray is Associate in Evaluation, Center for Instructional Development, Syracuse University.

Graduate Teaching Assistants' Implicit Theories of Teaching

Robert J. Menges and William C. Rando

Introduction

Interviews with graduate teaching assistants (TAs) probed what they mean by "teaching," requested their diagnosis of a classroom problem, and asked about actions they take to resolve such a problem. Results show that how they say they deal with the problem is related to how they think about teaching, that is, to their implicit theories.

To manage the complex levels of actions, thoughts, and feelings that are present in college classrooms, teachers develop theories that help them order experiences and predict events. It is characteristic of most teachers to make theory, if we generalize from research in precollege settings. A review of nine studies of the implicit theories of elementary and secondary teachers (Clark & Peterson, 1986) found theory making to be common. The review also documents that theories vary a good deal from one person to another with regard to content and orientation.

In an interview study of implicit theories, Fox (1983) asked newly appointed polytechnic teachers what they mean by "teaching." Some teachers held what he called simple theories, e.g., the "transfer" theory, in which the student is perceived as a vessel or a container to be filled, and the "shaping" theory, in which the student is regarded as clay or wood to be shaped or molded. Other teachers, usually those who already have some teaching experience, held more developed theories, e.g., the "traveling" theory, where the teacher serves as a guide over the terrain of subject matter. In developed theories, students are more likely to be regarded as contributing partners or active participants, whereas in simple theories they are likely to be seen as passive recipients of knowledge or training.

In the present study, we investigate implicit theories held by graduate teaching assistants.

Procedures

Graduate teaching assistants at Northwestern University were surveyed by the university's program for teaching assistants. The survey included a question asking whether the TA would be willing to participate in an interview about teaching. Twenty-two of those who agreed to participate were interviewed during spring quarter 1985.

This report is based on interviews with 20 persons from departments of anthropology, history, linguistics, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology, approximately equal numbers of males and females, who gave complete responses to the questions described below. Their TA experience ranged from three quarters to nine quarters, and their typical assignment was to lead weekly discussion sections that complement faculty lectures in large enrollment courses. Those who volunteered to be interviewed may not be representative of all TAs on campus, but they probably include persons who have given some thought to their assumptions about teaching and who are predisposed toward sharing their thoughts.

Members of a seminar on theories of instruction collaboratively developed the semistructured interview schedules and interviewed one another as practice for interviewing TAs. Interviews were taped, and transcripts of the audiotapes were subsequently analyzed.

Results

This report presents our analysis of responses to two interview questions. One question probes what the TA means by teaching. The other asks for comments on a teaching problem.

The Meaning of Teaching

Answers to the question, "What do you mean by teaching?" permit inferences about the theories that teachers espouse. Inspection of responses suggested three primary orientations: teaching as content, teaching as process, and teaching as motivation (see Display I). Each TA's initial or most emphatic response could be classified into one of these three categories. Classification required attention to the context in which remarks were made and to inflections in the speaker's voice. For example, whether the statement, "Teaching is engaging people in a set of ideas," is classified as content or as motivation depends on whether the speakers' voice emphasizes the last word or the third word in that sentence.

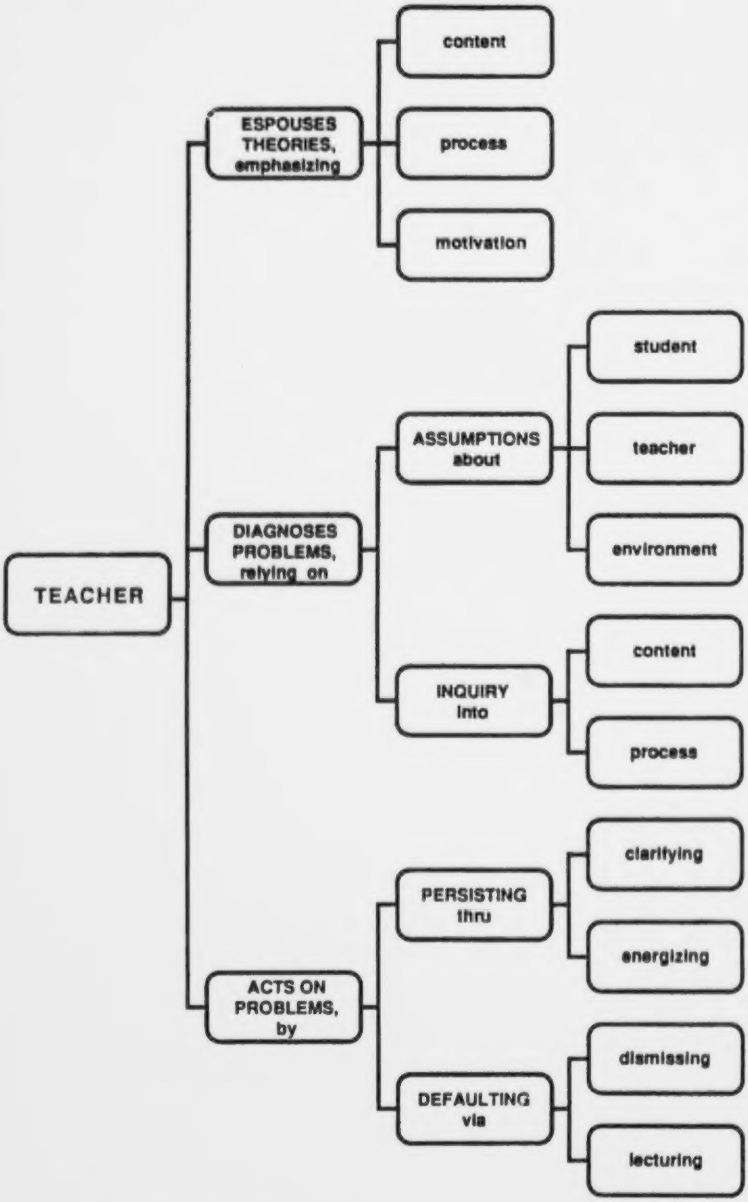
Instructors oriented toward *content* (n=7) indicated that course subject matter and mastery of that material by students is primarily what they mean by teaching. Among their comments.

> . . . when one presents to another person some idea or material.. . . communication of ideas that are important. Teaching really is my giving them knowledge and them really understanding it and being able to apply it.

Other instructors stated that teaching is helping students learn to think or to process information. This *process* (n=7) orientation is illustrated by the following responses:

> Teaching is making people think for themselves.. . . giving them the means to go on and look at questions and answer [questions] themselves. The most important thing is learning how to learn.. . . to get students to think intelligently.. . . teaching them how to grapple with questions. To teach is to help someone teach himself.

A process orientation toward teaching and education does not deny the importance of subject matter, but it gives higher priority to processes of cognitive development and to acquisition of thinking skills, usually through participation in class discussion. These TAs apparently want their students to leave class not merely having memorized or understood facts, concepts, and procedures pertinent to the course, but better able to think and to process information.


TEACHER
ESPOUSES THEORIES, emphasizing
content
process
motivation
DIAGNOSES PROBLEMS, relying on
ASSUMPTIONS about
student
teacher
environment
INQUIRY into
content
process
ACTS ON PROBLEMS, by
PERSISTING thru
clarifying
energizing
DEFAULTING via
dismissing
lecturing

Display I Graduate Teaching Assistants' Implicit Theories

> Still other TAs implied that *motivation* (n=6) or affect is central: The number one priority seems to be to interest students in the subject. Teaching is engaging people in a set of ideas.

Motivation oriented TAs give first priority to making course content interesting so that students feel involved with it both in and out of the classroom.

A Classroom Problem

Earlier in the interview TAs had been asked to describe their reactions to a classroom problem situation: "Can you imagine a time in one of your classes when you planned a discussion but almost no one responded or participated? What did you do? How did you determine the reasons for the situation?" All of the TAs could identify with this problem and some provided lengthy and detailed narratives, both about how they arrive at reasons for the situation and about what they do.

The question "How do you determine the reasons for the situation?" permits inferences about the basis for diagnosing this problem. Responses were of two types (see Display I). The majority responded in terms of an assumption about a student characteristic, an instructor characteristic, or a characteristic of the classroom environment. They indicated no attempt to test or clarify the assumption. The remaining TAs responded with some strategy for gathering more information about the reason for the problem, such as "I ask them if they've read it."

TAs who rely on *assumptions* (n=14) usually volunteered assumptions about students:

> It could be that nobody has done the reading. Apathy is typically the problem. Difficulty of the reading material makes them hesitant to respond. I assume that they're not interested. There were a couple of occasions in which I'm certain that they found it too difficult but mostly I think they're not interested. Early in the quarter I think it's insecurity but if it happens later it may be because they are afraid to look stupid in front of their friends, or sometimes it's because they haven't read it.

Eleven of the reported assumptions refer to students. Two refer to expectations of the TA, and one asserted that a characteristic of the classroom was responsible for the lack of discussion.

Other TAs engage in *inquiry* (n=6), indicating an attempt to seek more information.

> Several ask questions about student preparation or lesson content: First of all I would ask, "Did you do the assignment?" Because they don't always prepare. If they have prepared their lesson, then I would ask, "Were there any difficulties in understanding?" That's another possibility. If there were no difficulties, I would ask, "Was this topic just not of interest to you?" And if it wasn't, what I would possibly do is try and get responses as to why.

Another instructor prefers to reflect on the problem after the class is over:

> When I go home I try to analyze it. . . . Maybe the material was too difficult, maybe it was too easy, or just inappropriate for the group. . . . It's important to think about it, to see what one can do.

Others inquire into issues of process, often improvising as they go:

> Sometimes it's really hard to get students to say anything . . . sometimes I ask them questions, but sometimes that doesn't work [I would ask students] what's going on, why they are so quiet. That breaks the ice, too. Sometimes students don't want to admit that they're not getting the material. I try to anticipate problems in terms of material that you know they're going to find especially difficult. . . There's a lot of randomness that you can't predict. . . . I kind of wing it.

In summary, some of these TAs deal with unresponsive students by depending on already formed assumptions about the nature of students and their behavior, while others actively seek more information, usually from their students. Although both groups make decisions based on data, most rely on generalized past experience; far fewer TAs seek new, situationally specific data.

Responses to "What did you do?" reveal actions taken to deal with the problem. They fell into two categories (see Display I). Some TAs persist in attempts to get discussion going, while others default, opting for a different class format or for dismissal.

Strategies of those who *persist* (n=9) are illustrated by these comments:

> I would usually just go on to another question rather than trying to answer the first question by myself, hoping that if I throw out smaller subsidiary questions of the larger one, we can answer the smaller question and then come back to the larger question. I'll ask the same question in a different way. I would first try to lay out the text very carefully and explain all the concepts, then stimulate discussion by throwing out examples. I tried to think of something to get them charged up.

Notice how the responses of persisters vary slightly in terms of specific strategies. Some approaches are more motivation oriented, for example, "Get them charged up," while others are more cognitive, for example, "Ask the same question in a different way."

Other TAs choose different class activity or dismissal, that is, they *default* (n=11):

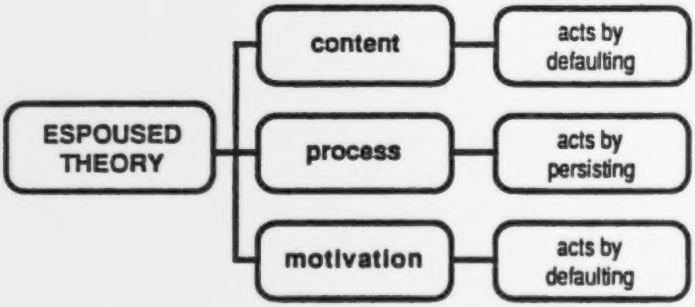
> I asked if anybody had questions, I waited and . . . I just wound up letting them go. Yea, that [failed discussion] definitely happens, that's where my inexperience as a teacher comes in. . . . I just grasp . . . I partially blame myself, I would have been more prepared to fill something in. Sometimes if it appears that their time and my time is not being used, I'll just let them out early. . . . If I've got something planned that's relevant, I'll throw that in. I always have more than one activity planned for a class.

Theories and Action

In terms of action science (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985), responses to these questions can reveal relationships among espoused theory of teaching (What do you mean by teaching?), diagnosis of classroom problems (How do you determine the reasons for the situation?), and action on the problem (What did you do?).

We expected some correspondence between what TAs say they mean by teaching and how they diagnose a classroom problem, but our results are unclear. Nearly all of those with the content orientation base their diagnosis on assumptions (six of seven). The majority of those who are process or motivation oriented also rely on assumptions (four of seven for process and four of six for motivation). In fact, because the majority of our respondents relied on assumptions (fourteen of twenty), there were too few inquirers for patterns to be discernable in their responses. Except for the content orientation, we regard these findings as inconclusive.

Regarding relationships between what TAs mean by teaching and how they say they deal with the problem situation, results are somewhat clearer (see Display II). Of those who espoused the content definition of teaching, most reported default strategies (five of seven). Of those espousing a motivation orientation, most also reported default strategies (four of six). But most of those who espoused a process orientation reported persistence (five of seven).



Display II Relationship between Espoused Theory and Reported Action

Discussion

Without denying that the determinants of classroom teaching behavior are complex, we believe these results suggest that implicit theories held by teachers explain at least in part why some instructors take one tack when confronted by difficulties and others take different tacks. Further, these relationships are intuitively sensible. Content oriented instructors give high priority to disseminating a certain body of information. When students do not participate in a planned discussion, the event (discussion) is secondary to the material (the subject matter). Instead of spending time trying to engage students, most of these instructors (five of seven) opt for a more controllable strategy such as lecturing.

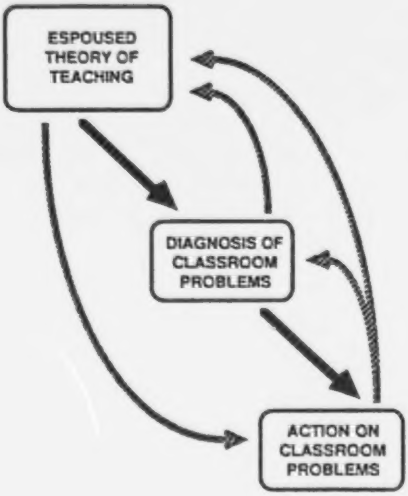
For the process oriented instructor, a discussion is much more than a vehicle for transferring information to students. It is in fact an end in itself. One objective of these instructors is that students process information, and discussion both encourages and demonstrates active processing. Thus, it seems reasonable that most process instructors (five of seven) persist, trying multiple strategies for getting a discussion going.

Since the motivation orientation is concerned primarily with students' affect and interest levels, these instructors most likely plan discussion to make the content more interesting and exciting. A failed discussion indicates that the plan had not worked; persisting would likely reduce interest still further. Thus, most motivation oriented instructors (four of six) default.

The relationship between theory and diagnosis is inconclusive, as noted above. Likewise, because of the small number of interviews, we draw no conclusion about the relationship between how TAs diagnose problems and how they deal with the problems. To answer these questions, research must include a larger number of participants and gather classroom data, e.g., direct behavioral observation or student questionnaires. For now, we suspect that in some cases actions depend on one's diagnosis (an intuitive expectation) or, given the fast pace of a classroom, diagnosis may occur upon reflection, after immediate action has been taken to deal with the problem.

Our interviews imply that the behavior of TAs, when confronted with classroom problems, is related to their implicit theories. The link between expressed theory and action on classroom problems represents our clearest finding. In Display III, the arrow linking theory and action skirts diagnosis because we could draw no conclusions about relationships between theory and diagnosis and between diagnosis and action.

Display III also illustrates other relationships among theory, diagnosis, and action. According to the conventional view of instruction, theory informs diagnosis and diagnosis informs action (solid black arrows). That is, the theoretical assumptions one holds shape one's analysis of a problem, and that analysis in turn shapes action to resolve the problem. But sometimes one acts by reflex, preceded by no diagnosis at all. In that case, diagnosis may occur after the event, upon reflection: that is, action prompts diagnosis that may in turn affect one's espoused theory. Or, reflecting on one's action may influence the espoused theory directly, without further diagnostic thinking. Those relationships (shown by the upward curving arrows) help explain how implicit theories get revised and how criteria for diagnosis may be modified.


ESPOUSED THEORY OF TEACHING
DIAGNOSIS OF CLASSROOM PROBLEMS
ACTION ON CLASSROOM PROBLEMS

Display III Hypothetical Relationships of Theory, Diagnosis, and Action

Conclusion

Activities can be devised for increasing TAs' awareness of the implicit theories they hold. The purpose of such activities, some of which we describe elsewhere (Menges & Rando, 1986), is to make implicit theories explicit. As a result, teachers more effectively distinguish theoretical assumptions from diagnostic dispositions and from actions, and they more easily recognize the variety of possible relationships among them.

Notes

[1] We thank Kathleen Brinko, Jerome Juska, and Kimberly Shelton for assistance with data collection.

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Robert J. Menges if Professor, Center for the Teaching Professions, Northwestern University. William C. Rando is an instructor at Northeastern University.

TA Socialization: A Communication Perspective

Ann L. Darling

This conference is evidence that we are in the midst of a relatively new and widespread concern about the quality of undergraduate instruction provided by teaching assistants (TAs) on many of our campuses. One way that colleges and universities have sought to address this concern is to provide special orientation and training programs for their TAs to enable them to be effective in their interactions with undergraduates. Evidence shows that the usefulness of these programs has been mixed (Carroll, 1980). Programs have successfully informed individuals about the duties and expectations of the TA role, but seemingly produced relatively limited effect with respect to long-term changes in TA attitude and/or behavior. Empirical and anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that, while teachers do undergo changes, these are due largely to the experience of teaching and interacting with teachers rather than to any specific training or orientation program (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). The purpose of this presentation is to provide a summary of some preliminary findings of a study I conducted about TA interactions with others and the role that communication plays in the more informal aspects of becoming effective in the TA role.

The informal aspects of acquiring a role is a process called socialization and has been defined by Merton et al., (1957, p. 287) as "the process by which people selectively acquire the values and attitudes, the interests, skills and knowledge–in short, the culture–current in groups in which they are, or seek to become a member." Much of the research on teacher socialization has taken a functionalist perspective (Zeichner, 1980). Characteristic of this view is the assumption that individuals are passive recipients of institutional messages; cultural reproduction is identified as the ultimate and inevitable outcome of socialization (Durkheim, 1956). More recent research has taken a dialectic perspective of socialization (i.e., Gehrke, 1981). In this model, individuals are assumed to be active constructors of their own socialization experiences. This more recent work has focused on the process rather than the outcomes of socialization. Most frequently guided by a symbolic interactionist perspective, research within the dialectic model has identified communication as an important element in the teacher socialization process.

The Study

The study I conducted was designed to address the general question: what is the role of communication in the socialization process for new TAs? My study also focused on two more specific research questions: (a) what are the important interactions for individuals during the socialization process and what are the salient characteristics of those interactions? and (b) what are the relationships among interaction activity, teacher communication concern and the socialization process?

In order to respond to these questions, I performed a series of intensive interviews. These weekly interviews, lasting approximately 45 minutes each, were conducted throughout the first academic quarter. Each week I asked individuals to describe their concerns, the important interactions of the week, the characteristics of those interactions, and the reasons the interactions were important. Interview notes and transcripts were analyzed weekly so that emergent patterns and themes could be probed, refined, and potentially verified by the participants.

Three new TAs–all socializing into the same department at a large research-oriented university–agreed to meet with me weekly for the purposes of this study. Two of the three individuals were working with the same instructor and course; the third was the sole TA assigned to a course that was cross-listed with another academic department. All three individuals were women and all three were new to teaching as well as to graduate school.

Although further collection and analysis of data is necessary before strong claims can be made about the role that communication plays in the socialization process for new graduate TAs, preliminary analysis of the data generated in this process suggests two interesting patterns that will be discussed here.

The first pattern concerns the kind of interactions that were perceived as the most important in terms of these TAs' socialization and role development. At the beginning of the quarter, the most important interactions for all three individuals were those with fellow first-year TAs. The new TAs met informally almost daily to talk about what had occurred in each other's classes. These conversations usually (although not exclusively) occurred in and around the TA office area and generally served several functions for the new individuals. In and through participating in these conversations, the new TAs were able to receive reassurance that their concerns and class were not radically different from anyone else's. Ideas about what to do in class and how to handle particular challenges were also a product of these conversations. Finally and not surprisingly, the conversations were perceived as an important place to vent the natural frustrations that go along with simultaneously being a teacher and a graduate student.

Although the pattern for interactions with other new TAs was initially strong, over time there were some changes in that pattern. By the end of the fourth week only one individual continued to rely exclusively on the group of new TAs for ideas and support. The other two individuals began to seek and use interactions with the experienced TAs as resources for information and assistance. While the experienced TAs were available and accessible throughout the quarter (and in fact were responsible for running the department TA orientation program), only after individuals had established a level of confidence for their role enactment (which they established by comparing themselves to each other during these daily interactions) did they approach experienced TAs with requests for information and/or advice. Interactions with the experienced group of TAs were never as frequent as those with individuals in the same cohort but grew to be more important in terms of ideas and support. It appears then that one pattern of communication in the socialization process for new TAs concerns the targets of assistance. Early in the socialization process it appears much more important to get a sense of where an individual fits with others in the same circumstance. Later, after one is sure that she or he is not radically different in her or his concerns and needs, it may be more efficient to consult experienced TAs.

The second emerging pattern concerned the role that these conversations played in terms of actual TA performance. For all three individuals, the informal everyday interactions with their peers and selected experienced TAs had more impact on their ongoing concerns, weekly curriculum, and handling of individual students than either the department orientation program or the formal weekly TA meeting. This department runs a relatively comprehensive orientation program for new TAs at the beginning of the academic year. In addition, two of the participants were required to attend a weekly TA meeting that focused on the ongoing responsibilities in their role. Neither of these two formalized programs had the kind of impact on the decisions they made in their TA role as did the more informal daily encounters they experienced. For example, one individual expressed concerns about her ability to plan and execute an effective discussion. During orientation week, "Leading a Discussion" was one of the primary topics covered. At each of the weekly TA meetings, individuals were asked by the professor to describe their ongoing needs or concerns. While both of these formal resources were available to the individual struggling with her skills in planning and executing an effective discussion, she did not refer to either as she described how she resolved her concerns. Rather she described experiences like: "I talked to the other TAs to see what they were doing," "I thought about what worked for me when I was an undergraduate," and, "I asked some of the experienced TAs how they learned to run a good discussion." As she then began to map out a plan for meeting her goal of running a good discussion it was the products of those interactions with peers and experienced TAs, as well as self-reflection, that formed the basis for her plans. She did not mention the discussion during orientation nor did she bring up her concerns at the weekly TA meeting. In general, then, for these individuals the frequent informal interactions with fellow first year TAs and the less frequent encounters with experienced TAs provided more of the resources they used in developing the attitudes and skills they needed to perform their role comfortably.

This study was designed to discover and describe the role that communication plays during the socialization process for new graduate TAs. I met with three individuals every week throughout their first academic quarter of teaching and being a graduate student. These three people provided me with a great deal of information about the functions of communication in the process of learning to play a new role and adjust to a particular way of life. This study is actually an ongoing project. Some initial findings were reported at the Ohio State conference and have been included in this summary. Preliminary data analysis suggests at least two patterns of interest to individuals responsible for the training and education of TAs. First, new TAs are more likely to share their real concerns and experiences with each other than with experienced people in the department. Second, new TAs use information and advice gained through informal daily interactions more than they do the resources provided through more traditional and formal formats such as department orientation program and weekly TA meetings. These early findings might suggest at least two ideas to those of us who want to provide training resources for new TAs. First, we might recognize that new TAs need to get to know each other before they can make efficient use of structured resources. It seems that there is some need for them to get acquainted in a context separate from that created by the inclusion of experienced TAs and/or faculty members. It might be useful for us, then, to design a party for them and not attend ourselves. Second, we might also consider that new TAs need resources in the form of people and ideas to be available to them in an informal, nonstructured way. To allow for this we might designate offices to maximize the likelihood that new and experienced TAs would meet and talk spontaneously and frequently.

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Ann L. Darling is Staff Consultant with the Center for Instructional Development and Research at the University of Washington.

The Role of Technique in Teacher Training

Hildebrando Ruiz

The mere fact that we have gathered for this conference is a most convincing statement about the importance and ever-increasing need for preparing college and university instructors in the art of teaching. Thus I will pass up the opportunity to belabor the need to provide prospective language teachers with sound training in teaching skills. Nor will I list the steps that have supposedly led me to success in my supervisory activities. Instead, I will raise some issues dealing with the task of guiding TAs of Spanish as a foreign language, issues that I think are relevant not only to the teaching of most foreign languages, but also to some extent to other university instruction delivered by graduate students.

The literature on the preparation of teaching assistants is healthily rich in information about what we are doing at our own institutions. It is also abundant in recommendations made on the basis of our own experience, with the underlying assumption that our procedures will also be applicable to other contexts. Of course, there is always the danger of implicit oversimplification in many of these recommendations in view of the fact that the proponents are rarely concerned with even a minimum of validation of the obtained results, since they rely primarily on intuition and anecdotal or personal experience.

My main contention is that the task entrusted to a language supervisor is fundamentally a task of persuasion, that is, persuasion as a means of obtaining some form of behavior modification on the part of those under supervision. Persuasion, of course, permeates almost all facets of human communication. We witness it daily on radio and TV when sponsors attempt to create in us a real or imagined need for an advertised product. The strategy is usually that of establishing a relationship between the product and states of health, comfort, beauty, happiness, and so on. Foreign language teachers are also constantly attempting to persuade their students to learn and use a new instrument of communication, or to understand different cultural values. Teacher trainers equally try to persuade their trainees by inciting them to modify their behavior in the classroom and in almost every aspect related to the process of language teaching.

The main objective of this paper, therefore, is to examine some aspects of my persuasion efforts as a teacher trainer and raise some issues based on the obstacles that I have encountered in accomplishing my own objectives as a supervisor of Spanish at the University of Georgia. I would like to center my discussion around a straightforward parallel between the average foreign language learner in this country and the prospective teacher, primarily the one who takes our methods course and attends preservice training sessions. This parallelism can be drawn about a number of variables. However, I will limit myself to the issue of motivation.

Motivation can be characterized as "the state or process which determines the allocation of energy to particular responses rather than others" (Jamieson, 1985). The motivational energy of the typical language learner in colleges and universities is, by and large, *instrumental* (Gardner and Lamber, 1972). This orientation is the affective factor that leads to learning a foreign language for utilitarian reasons, such as increasing the possibilities of getting a job. The motivation can also be *integrative*, if the driving force is to meet with, talk to, share interests with, and become like the native speakers of the target language. It is possible on the basis of our observation, that the average foreign language learner has utilitarian rather than integrative motives to study the language.

In the case of the teaching assistant, the situation with respect to teacher training is no different. At the University of Georgia, as in most foreign language departments across the country, the basic language programs are in the hands of TAs, whose main interest is, understandably, their graduate programs. A teaching assistantship becomes therefore, only a means to an end. It is far from being felt, as it should be, as an integral part of their academic and professional readiness. This observation has been made repeatedly in the literature, and very often the blame is put on administrators and members of the faculty who either interfere or do not take the initiative to redefine the reasons for the employment of graduate TAs, namely training in foreign language pedagogy (Nerenz et al., 1979). Upon the realization that in most institutions the first course taught by TAs coincides with their training course, some authors conclude that, "teaching and learning about teaching are viewed as mutually reinforcing activities, each becoming more effective and interesting by virtue of the other" (Nerenz, 1979, p. 878). I suspect that the cause of this coincidence is found less in pedagogical considerations than in the need to staff the low-level curriculum economically.[1]

It should come as no surprise then, that most language supervisors have under their direction inexperienced TAs who are concerned mainly with specific teaching procedures that will enable them merely to carry out their most immediate obligations. The instrumental motivation of these instructors is understandable, but it is by no means the most desirable. It may, indeed, be the cause of the present status of teacher training, as well as the main deterrent to research in the making of language teaching professionals. After presenting an overview of the trends in training and supervision of graduate assistants, Hagiwara (1970) has observed that it would be shortsighted to train them for the express purpose of satisfying the internal needs of a language department. A similar view has been expressed repeatedly in the professional literature with various degrees of explicitness.

I would like to emphasize at this point that while teaching languages differs significantly in some aspects from teaching in other fields, the preparation of foreign language teachers also has much in common with other forms of professional training. One such aspect is the process of integrating theory and practice, which is a concern of any professional program in any field. However, it is only in foreign language training that being a native speaker instructor of a second language without academic or professional training is a recurrent possibility.

In many institutions where foreign languages are taught, we can find prospective teachers with a high degree of proficiency in the second language before training begins. Many of these are native speakers who have no foreign language pedagogy and no formal knowledge of their own language. Others, on the contrary, are well qualified as far as proficiency goes, and some even have pedagogical expertise, but are nevertheless unaware of the educational system and the cultural and social environment of the American classroom where they are about to perform. A third group consists of individuals who are cognizant of the cultural setting and the social context only because they were educated in it. Their weakness, though, is frequently in terms of their proficiency in the language they are expected to teach.

In addition, I should add that foreign language teachers, much more than teachers in other fields, are in a profession that requires intense personal interaction between them and their students. Too often, foreign language teachers are judged not on the basis of their knowledge of the subject and their skill in transmitting it, but on the outcome of very complex relationships between them and those whose language skills they are helping to develop (Brumfit, 1983, p. 60). When there are problems of communication the consequences are easily predictable, since communication is not only the goal of language teaching, but also the process through which the goal is attainable. Jarvis (1983) expands on the uniqueness of the teaching-learning process when he considers variables such as use of time, pace of teacher's speech, and length of out-of-class assignments.

For over 30 years the foreign language teaching profession has advised us to provide teachers with a background in language learning theories, teaching skills, and principles in methodology (Nerenz, Herron and Knop, 1976, p. 875). The underlying assumption is that effective teaching derives from exposure to organized theories of language learning and pedagogy. The format, the contents, and the intensity of this preparation have been the object of a number of studies that, through questionnaires, have tried to gather pertinent information (Berwald, 1976; Nerez et al., 1979; Ervin & Muyskens, 1982; Hagiwara, 1970). Some of these studies have identified the meeting of the trainees' most immediate needs as their highest priority for their training (Ervin & Muyskens, 1982; Nerenz et al., 1979). These needs and wants most often take the form of techniques for conducting and managing a class, i.e., how to deal with shy students; how to use time efficiently; how to get students to speak; how to make class interesting and lively; how to keep a certain pace; how to deal with low maturity of some students, etc.

There is no doubt that these matters are in fact not only real but pertinent to success in language teaching. It is also understandable that prospective teachers and teachers in service feel the need for direct and visible guidance in such treacherous waters. However, to put it bluntly, to build a training program around the needs perceived by these instructors is tantamount to attempting "rigid rules of thumb, clear statements of practice, and absolute generalizations . . . for a world of constantly fluctuating personal relationships, renegotiated behavior patterns, and expectations for education which will be constantly responding to new demands from society and government" (Brumfit, 1983, p. 60).

After having observed and interacted with a fairly large number of TAs in their efforts to teach Spanish as a foreign language, I have grown increasingly suspicious about the wisdom of feeding these young teachers packages of ready-made techniques as the basic core of their training. This is in spite of their requests for "practical" procedures for them to use with their own students. After all, the TAs I have supervised are no different from those who have given feedback about perceived instructional needs as reported in the literature. The problem is that, too often, techniques become only half-routines that TAs attempt without the necessary understanding for their implementation and adaptation. These procedures are little more than information that does not become knowledge because many of the TAs are unable to develop a personal relationship with it. (See Larsen-Freeman, 1983.)

Other times, the routines that might do wonders for me are in direct conflict with the TAs' own perceptions about what language is, how it works, and how it should be learned. That is why we are often faced with the paradox of wanting concrete procedures of instruction, and almost simultaneously experience apprehension about the validity and insufficiency of most techniques. The problem, as I see it, is that the process of learning a second language is much more complex than is usually thought and, consequently, the teaching of the language cannot be approached in a reductionist fashion as a by-product of the "technique-learning-syndrome."

On the Nature of *Technique*

Although we can easily describe how we perform tasks in everyday life, we rarely stop to examine the nature of the processes involved in such tasks. Instead, we normally focus on the outcome, that is, the product of processes such as those of teaching and learning. Yet it is upon close examination of teachers in action that we learn that their behavior can hardly be regarded as static and susceptible to easy formalization. Indeed, when we interact with our students, we are constantly making decisions and selections from the options that we have at hand from what training and experience have taught us. Understanding the *fluid* and dynamic nature of behavior in general should, therefore, keep us from concocting formulaic prescriptions to be replicated, expecting similar or identical results on every occasion. As Clark puts it, "The term *technique* is merely a label for what we do as teachers, a sort of conversational shorthand which . . . allows us to negotiate professional discussions with a minimum of confusion– . . . and at times . . . with a minimum of communication." (1984, p. 583). But when we are asked to provide techniques (i.e., for the teaching of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, or for stimulating conversation, etc.), most of the time we are being asked to take into consideration a fairly large number of factors (i.e., motivation, goals, age, sex, background of students; physical and qualitative features of the classroom, materials, resources, etc.), and then make decisions as such factors interact with each other. I contend that this is a very demanding task, to say the least.

The unformulated assumption of those seeking "very practical" procedures of language instruction to meet immediate needs is that pedagogical knowledge takes the form of basic skills generalizable across a variety of situations. That is, its application is context-independent to the extent that it is not bound to particular circumstances. But clearly, responses to these needs become unreliable when the teacher trainer transmits only those generalizable findings that are consistent with his or her own interpretation of language teaching-learning, and without the benefit of the full participation of the trainee's own human qualities and resources.

While I am ready to recognize the usefulness and the importance of specific teaching procedures, I feel that a sufficient understanding of the rationale for such particular techniques, as well as the implications of adaptations, are of greater long-term benefit. All that I am acknowledging here is the need for an integration of theory and practice. As we know so well, this is easy to accept but rather difficult to implement. The integration of theory and practice is what Jarvis (1983), following Smith (1980), calls "pedagogical knowledge," that is, the set of principles and notions that enable the teacher to observe, analyze, and make decisions as to what to do. The sources of pedagogical knowledge are, according to Jarvis, research as well as "clinical experience," that is, the "distillation" of years of experience, transmitted orally or in the professional literature from teacher to teacher.

What I have called the "technique-learning syndrome" is, I believe, a by-product of the dissatisfaction of trainees, as well as teacher trainers, with *theory* as a component of the methods course. If the process of learning a foreign language is seen, as it should be, as an enormously complex one, the process of teaching it is no less complex. Thus, it appears somewhat quixotic to attempt to develop an effective teacher, with a well-rounded preparation, within a semester-long training period. The problem is compounded by the fact that, as has been described in a national survey (Schultz, 1980), the quality of teaching is not a prime factor for the reappointment of TAs, mainly because the need to staff the undergraduate curriculum economically takes precedence. Equally troublesome is that, according to that survey, in the majority of cases only a bachelor's degree is required for the granting of a TA position. In short, if the graduate assistant has only an instrumental motivation to learn the bare facts of foreign language teaching, it is hard to avoid a "cookbook approach," to the detriment of a more comprehensive understanding of the teacher's task.

The integration of theory and practice, while desirable, has proved to be an elusive enterprise. Sometimes it is because of a misguided interpretation of the role of theoretical research in teaching, which has led some to attempt a direct transplant of its findings into the foreign language classroom.

On the following pages I will provide, for the sake of illustration only, a specific example of my efforts to integrate theory and practice while training Spanish TAs. At the same time, I will point out possible sources of failure of these young teachers to make the connection between the information I give them and their own classroom experience. The issue I have chosen to make my point is the role of grammar in learning a foreign language.

My first step is *not* to give, *much less to impose* on my trainees, a list of "surefire techniques" to teach a grammar point. In order to be persuasive without being coercive, I find it necessary to provide the TA with sufficient understanding of the basis, as well as the implication, of adopting a particular procedure. Therefore, I always insure that the TA understands first that the word *grammar* is subject to various interpretations.

Grammar can be synonymous with statements of social etiquette, or prescriptions for social behavior; it can mean linguistic norms of a given speech community; it can refer to labels for certain concepts, functions, or formal categories of human language; it can be taken as a set of generalizations or regularities underlying the apparent chaos of oral speech; and, of course, grammar can be taken as a theory about what speakers know about their own language. Awareness of the plurality of interpretations of the word *grammar* will save the prospective teacher from the otherwise unavoidable confusion arising from opposing views about the role of grammar in learning a foreign language. Higgs (1985) observes, accurately I believe, that the acrimony in the discussion of this issue is the direct result of the discussants' using the same word with different interpretations.

The TA needs to understand also that Spanish, like all languages, is fundamentally rule-governed, and its usage is, by necessity, determined by principles that the native speaker applies consistently and systematically. It is of paramount importance for the TA, however, to realize that, in spite of the advances of linguistic research, the complexity of language is of such magnitude that many aspects of it remain unaccounted for, not only by the teacher, but by the theoretician. In fact, many important aspects of language and language use are not even taught, or cannot be taught in the traditional sense of the word, mainly because they are not tangible in the way that nouns and verbs are. However, we know that much of this information is real and plays an important role in communication. The successful learner of Spanish ends up learning it once he or she confirms or perceives its relevance during linguistic interaction.

Emphasis on the complexity of language is not a trivial matter within the context of teacher education. The average untrained native instructor, under the pressures of teaching duties, frequently does not realize that the description given by the textbook is not by any means an adequate description of his or her own grammar, much less an adequate description of how it is acquired.[2]

On the basis of findings from language acquisition research, I make the TA aware of the similarities and differences between the acquisition of first and second languages, particularly with respect to such variables as motivation, age, needs, and many other affective elements. It is important for the teacher to distinguish between linguistic rules characterized by descriptive adequacy and their predictive capabilities, as opposed to pedagogical rules and their instrumental role. Awareness of this latter distinction will enable the trainee teacher to cope with the compromise between linguistic accuracy and pedagogical validity that is sometimes necessary.

Finally, from "clinical experience," the TAs must understand that teaching a language as an intellectual exercise, by means of analysis of grammatical relations, is *a very costly* way of acquiring language proficiency. They should also realize that successful teachers, as defined by Moskowitz (1976), do not identify the teaching of grammar with the explanation of grammar (Higgs, 1985). It is a truism that the clearer the dimensions of a grammatical problem are for the instructor, the more precise and economical his or her statements will be in the classroom. Another aspect known from experience is that most foreign language learners in the United States are not very often interested in learning grammar as an abstract body of information worthy of being known for its own sake. This is relevant in the training of foreign TAs, who often have a particular curiosity and interest in the study of formal properties of the language they are learning themselves (i.e., English), and assume, mistakenly, that the average foreign language learner in the United States has a similar interest. My findings on Spanish TAs and their attitude about *grammatical explanation* as a core activity in their instruction is partially accounted for by this assumption, which I persistently address.

The specific details of the procedure I recommend for the teaching of a given grammatical point are not of interest at this moment. Suffice it to say that, following ideas along the lines of Higgs (1985), such a procedure consists of steps, all of which have the purpose of helping the learner grasp the parameters of the grammatical principle in question, as a way of expressing meaning. It is a procedure with a minimum of intervention on the part of the instructor, except for: (a) communicating what is about to be learned, (b) providing graphic/visual illustrations where the structure occurs, (c) providing an oral model of the grammatical operation in question, (d) creating attention-getters in order to focus the learner's interest on the grammar point, and (e) providing and facilitating opportunities to practice the grammatical concept within similar or parallel contexts. In general, it is a procedure that depends heavily on illustration rather than explanation to the extent that this is permissible. The overall purpose of these steps is to establish a relationship between forms in the target language and the conceptual organization of the learner.

Let's assume for a moment that the TA has been given the opportunity to discuss and understand the principles underlying this particular procedure. Let's assume also that presentations have been made by the supervisor in order to illustrate how these steps are carried out. How can we determine if in fact we have triggered behavior modification on the part of our trainees with respect to the need to minimize grammatical explanation? In other words, to what extent have we motivated them to apply what they have learned? As Jamieson puts it: " . . . motivational energy of a human kind cannot be specified in quantities, but can only be inferred as a result of human behavior" (1985, p. 31). To be truthful, after observing a large number of classes by native speakers, results have been mixed, and often I have been disappointed because of the persistence of excessive explanation and other interventionist features of instruction.

I find a strong correlation between the resilience of the tendency to identify *teaching* with *explanation* and the following factors: (a) the cultural and educational background (i.e., beliefs and attitudes) of TAs; (b) the lack of integrative motivation to attempt an instructional approach different from the way in which they were taught; (c) apprehension in leaving a feeling of security nurtured by structural (i.e., based on discrete grammar points) instruction, vis a vis the still-opaque horizons of proficiency and a notion of grammar as a process rather than a product.

Repeated class observations, followed by lengthy hours of (mostly) friendly *conversation* about the classes observed, have convinced me that the three factors just mentioned are in themselves powerful sources of resistance to my persuasion efforts. It would be naive to think that well-established beliefs (overtly stated or not) on the part of the TA about how language works and how it should be taught can be eradicated (if they should be) by means of ready-made techniques of instruction. By and large, native Spanish TAs, as well as a large number of Spanish faculty members, share a general need for the preservation of the academic respectability of the process of learning and teaching their language in the classroom environment. Consequently, a deemphasis of the formal features of language, along with their thorough explanation, is perceived as a threat to the academic weight of teaching languages. Ironically, the pedagogical value of many an explanation by an untrained native instructor is questionable, since it is based on intuitive knowledge, and has little instrumental value for the learner.

The prospective teacher usually does not have a sufficient incentive for long-term retention of the information received in the methods course, mainly because of his or her mere instrumental motivation. In this respect, the language supervisor is likely to fail in efforts to make the connection between the information communicated to the TAs and their educational experience.

Conclusion

In view of the situation described in the preceding pages, what I attempt to do in my role of supervisor is to raise TAs' consciousness. That is to say, I attempt to sensitize them about their own classroom behavior, and to inform them about the issues being researched in foreign language training, so that these prospective teachers can *experience* the pertinence of those issues, not just read about them in the methods course. This might not seem like a response to the *immediate* needs of the trainee. However, I contend that it is the surest way of learning about teaching, even if it takes more than two or three years to become a seasoned teacher, endowed with mechanisms to make informed decisions. My rationale is that the development of attitudes, values, and beliefs about language teaching and learning, is as important as the development of cognitive skills. I am aware of the risk of being denigrated for having formulated neither first precise prescriptions for teaching effectiveness nor the "best method" by which students supposedly learn a foreign language. My position is not a theoretically powerful one, but it is a position that leads to a more insightful interpretation of the issues and the identification of research that will ultimately lead to a more useful understanding of the role of the supervisor in the education, and not the mere training, of TAs.

Notes

[1] There is also a perceived shortage of graduate students in some institutions today, as can be seen in the aggressive methods of recruiting on the part of officials whose task is to attract (at times through dubious means) students so that the graduate faculty has classes to teach.

[2] In fact, even experienced instructors have a great deal of difficulty accepting recent findings of language learning research, not because change is painful for them, but because such findings actually undermine what they have been assuming for years. Take, for instance, the role that tradition has assigned to grammar rules. I contend that the grammatical statements found in textbooks, independent of their linguistic validity, are taken by the majority of foreign language teachers as actual instruments of encoding and decoding speech acts, or at least as prerequisites for successful communication, even at elemental levels. However, as Garrett puts it, "When we complain that teaching students grammar rules does not enable them to communicate, we only confirm what linguistic theory has implied all along: The rules which describe the system attested to by competence are abstract descriptive generalizations that do not per se describe the mental process by which a speaker formulates or comprehends any particular utterance." (1986, pp. 137-8) That is, while the analyst's rule has, supposedly, psychological reality at the level of the system, we should not assume that speakers begin from knowledge about how the linguistic system works in order to produce a given utterance.

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Hildebrando Ruiz is TA Supervisor for Spanish at the University of Georgia.

Factors in Locating a Program within the University Organization

Larry L. Loeher

Initiating a TA training program is a formidable task. Smock and Menges (1985) have nicely outlined some of the advantages and disadvantages of various program formats and locations. The next step is to assess which format, or combination of formats and loci, are most applicable to each situation.

There are several main factors that aid in the determination of the appropriate location for a program. Although I identify six factors, you may find that only a few are pertinent in your case, or that additional variables intervene. My categories, which are interconnected and therefore in no particular sequence, are: position/perspective, resources, institutional culture, institutional structure, program goals, and time frame.

Position/Perspective

Identify yourself. Strategies employed in the establishment of a TA training program will vary with the position of the individual or group seeking the program. A graduate student has a different sequence of steps to follow than does a department chair or a graduate dean or the president of a university. These positions are naturally limiting in that they define a starting point. In each case, however, the effort has a greater chance of success when a coalition of perspectives has been forged. Therefore, you must be able to identify clearly for others what your own position is, and then seek representatives of other perspectives who may share your interest. You may have the pleasant surprise of discovering unsuspected allies and, if there are none, you will at least identify your major sources of opposition.

Resources

The position(s) you hold will also, in large measure, determine the resources you have at hand. Graduate students have little more than experience and time to offer, department chairs may have space, deans might have staff and so forth. Generally, in looking at a budget, the list of institutional needs far outstrips the resources available to fulfill them and an allocation struggle ensues. Consequently, there are few designated training resources waiting for programs to claim them. A critical factor in identifying the location of a training program is thus an inventory of resources needed and the location of potential resources that might justifiably be made available. Having identified what, if anything, is present or accessible, either individually, or collectively among a coalition, a program should also target the next increment of needed resources. Most growth is modestly incremental with occasional bursts of windfall funding (usually in response to a particular external need). Knowing what the next unmet need is, and how much it costs to meet it, provides an action plan that can take advantage of variations in the resource allocation process.

Resources–whether space, faculty time, staff salaries, hardware, or whatever–are almost always directed at institutional goals. Schools adapt well to changing goals, although not as fast as students might wish. Therefore, in order to attract a flow of resources, it is important that a program establish a claim to the priority of training and the resources necessary to accomplish it. As training becomes a legitimate and established priority, resources will be directed toward that purpose.

An unfortunate fact of life is that resources to accomplish a purpose, such as training, occasionally fall into the hands of those who are incapable of spending them wisely, or even at all for the designated reason. There are two approaches to consider. The first is that you may find that they would be eager to have someone breathe life into a program. Rather than being hostile to a supposed intruder bent on diverting resources, some offices are grateful for the appearance of someone who has a clear sense of what is needed and appropriate, and can assume the responsibility of guiding a moribund or misdirected program. Tact is highly desirable in such a case, but ideas are the most valuable resource.

The second approach is to employ the "shut-up" factor. If you complain loud and long enough about the institution's inability to do something, you begin to own the problem and you will often be given your own opportunity to achieve those goals, either in the hope that you will succeed or in the hope that you will at least shut up if you fail. Many training programs have captured resources in just that manner.

Most training programs have to fight the "battle of the budget" and justify their existence annually. Sometimes smaller programs benefit because they are too small to fight over, and big programs are safe because they have inertia to overcome antagonists; programs intermediate in size and longevity often have the hardest struggle.

A good strategy in such a case is to develop supporting documents and identify a program's successes as they happen. The headway achieved in this manner eases the work in preparing a budget request and justifying the arguments for its contents.

Institutional Goals

The goals of an institution are often stated as: "research, teaching, community service," or similar worthwhile endeavors. These stated goals may in fact not represent what has been called the institutional culture, which identifies the *values* as well as the *goals* of the institution. While administrators may make public claims about research, teaching, and community service, they frequently sidestep the relative weighting that each of these goals receives, such as: research, 85%; teaching, 14%; and community service, 1%. In fact, when pressed to discuss whether research or teaching is more important, these same administrators usually begin to rely on phrases such as, "I think good research and good teaching go hand in hand"–at least, that is the phrase I use. Committees on tenure and promotion are usually spared the need to utter such pronouncements–they know the values they are meant to uphold and they act accordingly, and it is these values that must be attended to.

If you come from a midsize liberal arts college where all the faculty place an emphasis on high quality teaching, I would assume that you already have mechanisms in place to train graduate students in pedagogy. I presume the rest of us come from less fortunate environments–which is not to say that good teaching is not valued or cannot be recognized, it is just that it is not valued enough, or not valued across the board by all faculty, or not to all departmental programs, or not to the degree desired.

The institutional culture may be the most critical factor in determining the nature and location of a training program because it permeates every facet of the institution: resources, goals, structure, etc. As an example, the manner in which teaching assistants are recruited and employed is a direct reflection of the prevailing culture. If research is the dominant value, a teaching assistant position is usually considered a consolation prize for those who failed to receive research assistantships. Furthermore, the TAship is defined as "graduate student support" and is considered as part of a battery of recruiting tools to draw superior candidates to a program.

On the other hand, where teaching is a paramount, or at least a commensurate value, a TA position is more likely to be defined as an apprenticeship than as support. It is not a recruiting inducement, but a prize awarded to the most qualified students–and in some cases is a requirement of the scholarly training of all the graduate students in a program.

If, upon reflection, you think that teaching is not a strong component of your institution's cultural values–or worse, not even stated as an explicit goal–then your task in establishing pedagogic training is significantly greater than at other schools. You might want to identify the most likely area of support, whether an individual, a department, or an office, and start there. As a flanking movement, you might want to redefine pedagogic training in terms more acceptable to the prevailing cultural milieu, e.g., skills appropriate to lecturing or leading small group discussions might be described generally as communication skills and identified as an aid to making effective presentations at professional meetings. Emphasis might be placed on how training improves the efficiency of TAs, or reduces lab breakage, or enhances undergraduate enrollment, etc. Redefine the terms, but continue with the program.

Whatever the situation, I would argue that no program that openly violates or conflicts with the cultural norms and values of the institution will last for very long nor have much impact while it endures. It is essential that you identify your programmatic goals in a manner that conforms–or at least appears to conform–with existing institutional goals and that supports the interests of the constituents.

Institutional Structure

A stroll through the catalog will almost always reveal the formal structure of an institution, but we all know you need to read between the lines before the organizational hierarchy becomes apparent.

At some schools, the president may impose his or her will, either directly or through the auspices of the administration; at other schools the faculty on the academic senate pulls the strings, and occasionally you find that control is concentrated into the hands of the deans or the department chairs. At many schools–in fact most larger schools–the structure is more complex. The principle of "shared governance" may prevail, and precise authority may be obscure and often a negotiable, or at least arguable, point.

It is, therefore, important to assess the organizational structure of your school and identify the appropriate enclaves in which a program might flourish. A school with control concentrated under a strong president may indicate that a central administrative program has the best opportunity. A school with carefully delineated departments along traditional disciplinary lines may indicate that departmental programs will be supported most strongly.

It is also possible that certain kinds of authority are delegated to different structures. A training program must identify the individuals or groups that can justifiably claim "ownership" of a program and provide a supportive environment. At my own school, despite a strong administrative authority, the faculty have full academic responsibility within the structure of a senate and powerful departmental organizations. At one time we offered campus-wide training programs for our 1,400 TAs that drew a total audience of six, despite widespread advertising and the presence of well-known authorities. In our second effort, the exact same presentations offered at the departmental level without the advertising consistently drew 80% to 90% of TAs. We learned our lesson and now direct most of our resources into departmental programs.

Program Goals

The world is full of people who started off on a short trip and ended up thousands of miles away with little understanding of how they got there. Many TA training programs share that exact experience.

A program must know what it wants to accomplish before it can begin to measure how well it has succeeded–that is basic to everyone. But the divergence in views as to just what "training" should accomplish is quite great. There are at least six models: (a) Some programs look toward the functional aspects of course administration–location of the ditto machine, how the mid-term should be graded, who teaches which section, etc. (b) Some programs (especially where departments offer multisection courses) focus on standards–to make sure entropy is covered in the fifth week, or that gerunds are taught in the fourth week–and that all students are equally prepared for the same final exam. (c) Some programs will focus on mechanics and simple methods: how to use the blackboard, ways to establish class participation, the most effective questioning techniques, how eye contact can improve student evaluations, etc. (d) Some programs will look only at a single problem: how to screen international TAs for language competence, how to maintain safety in a lab, what materials are needed for an experiment, etc. (e) Some programs will be firmly tied into a specific discipline–the best way to teach continental drift, how to get your students to remember muscle groups, three techniques for using the beam balance, favorite examples of onomatopoeia, etc. (f) Some programs will consider the nature of communication, how students learn, Bloom's taxonomy, what the tests you write reveal about your concept of knowledge, and so on.

These are not mutually exclusive categories, nor are any necessarily more appropriate than others. It is important, though, that all of your protraining supporters agree as to what "training" should encompass.

Likewise, it is important to acknowledge that programs evolve. One school I know offered a workshop that was born as "objective grading standards for subjective materials," which, because that was almost always in reference to writing, became "how to evaluate student writing." After several iterations, the workshop revealed that TAs would not correct grammar because they were not sure themselves what was correct. From there, a trainer finally developed a workshop series that taught graduate students how to write. Although it was important, the TA training program disbanded that workshop before it had to explain to the graduate dean, much less to the legislature, why a graduate student had trouble writing a decent paper. They have since reformulated their original workshop (and all of their PhDs can write). Comparing the content of a program to its intended goals is an ongoing process.

Time Line

Many programs suffer, not from poor content nor poor execution, but from poor timing. This is especially true when initiating a program, but it is also a factor in program development. However fast you want your program to grow, it will probably take longer than expected. It is relatively easy to work fast on a single section or course, but considerably more difficult to involve a whole college in training.

The principle of incrementalism is a relatively safe practice to follow. A program is most secure when it grows in logical increments that are built on experience and successful practice. A budget request should never be larger than the amount that realistically can be spent. A program outline should never promise more than it can actually deliver.

Sometimes the problem is maintaining growth. At other times the problem is that someone believes that growth can be imposed from without. Legislatures in particular enjoy throwing money at a problem and assuming it will be solved. ("So your foreign TAs can't speak English, eh, well here's $30,000 and make sure they're fluent by next week.") It is hard to refuse the resources–maybe even politically unpopular–but you must determine for yourself how quickly a program that achieves your goals and spends your resources wisely can be built. A short-term funding gain might be more than offset by a long-term loss of credibility. Know what time frame is appropriate for your purpose.

First Steps

The first step in all of this is identifying the need for training and substantiating the validity of the need. After that comes the definition of what training ought to be, how it should be accomplished, who should do it, who will pay for it, and all the attendant considerations involved in creating a training program. While I cannot offer a linear set of procedures to follow, I am confident that consideration of the factors outlined above will ease the process.

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Larry L. Loeher is Director of Instructional Improvement at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Department-Based and Centralized TA Training Programs

John D. W. Andrews

This panel deals with the question of how a TA training effort should be located organizationally and with the respective benefits of departmental and campus-wide training systems. One panel member represents a department-based program, one, a relatively centralized program, and one, a system that combines elements of each. The last of these three is the program for which I am responsible.

We operate on the belief that there are benefits that stem from a departmental focus and from a more universal emphasis, and strive to combine the advantages of both. Accordingly, we provide a central training and consultation service that works very closely with individual departments and plans workshops specifically tailored to each department. Such workshops generally are held within a single discipline or within several closely allied disciplines such as chemistry and physics or sociology and psychology. Often they are planned and/or conducted in collaboration with a faculty member or master TA from the department(s) involved. Workshop materials, such as demonstration videotapes, are designed to focus on the specific issues raised by teaching that discipline, such as mathematical problem-solving in the sciences or the evaluation of writing in the humanities.

The strength of a discipline-focused approach is that teaching strategies can be closely coordinated to the substantive issues and disciplinary knowledge that is central to a given department. Representatives of the discipline can provide in-depth knowledge of the problems involved in teaching a particular set of ideas–such as Marxism–or in working with a format unique to the discipline–such as a workshop in improvisational music. Such representatives will also have strong credibility among new TAs with whom they share a disciplinary allegiance. In many instances, too, they will serve as consultants–making class visits and providing other sorts of help. Training activities centered on a department also help to build communication and a positive climate for teaching within that department. These are areas in which a centralized program is often not at its best.

Contrastingly, the strength of a centralized program is its greater breadth of perspective, its concern for the teaching climate on the campus as a whole, and its ability to marshal knowledge about the intertwined processes of instructional communication and student intellectual development. We are a link to the body of research and writing on instructional methods and can often suggest fresh teaching ideas. We can be expert on the skills involved in eliciting participation, fostering learning, enhancing student self-esteem, and many other functions that cut across all disciplines. We also offer an array of teaching improvement tools–such as videofeedback, specially designed questionnaires, and small group student evaluation, and we can use our wide experience with these tools to help instructors use them most fruitfully. I have found that, with increasing experience, I have learned how to translate general teaching approaches into discipline-specific terms–to use brainstorming to analyze a literary work or to foster mathematical problem-solving skills, for example. When working with departments on the design of a training program, we are also able to acquaint those responsible with the options that are available in terms of workshop format and other features. Often this involves a cross-fertilization, in which ideas used by one department are applicable in another. Our central role places us in a good position to play the role of "bee" as we go from one setting to another.

At its best, this sort of partnership enables us to mesh the two halves of teaching–disciplinary expertise and instructional communication skill–in a way that makes the greatest use of those who are most thoroughly steeped in each area. Perhaps in some ideal world these two halves will fuse; perhaps, in fact, the graduates of the many TA training programs that this conference is designed to promote will be more able to accomplish this fusion than were their predecessors. For the foreseeable future, however, the collaborative approach described here seems to me the most fruitful way to move toward greater unification.

John D. W. Andrews is Director of Teaching Development Programs at the University of California-San Diego.

TA Pedagogical Preparation: Should a General or Discipline-Specific Approach Be Used?

E. Leonard Jossem

I know that it is early in the day, but I need your help. I would like to ask you all to take out a piece of paper and a pencil or a pen. (The reader is urgently requested to join in this experiment now. The point of much of what will be said depends upon the personal participation of the reader.) What I would like to ask you to do now is a very simple thing. Just sign your name. I'll do it also here on the overhead transparency. Is everybody ready? Do you all have it done? OK, good.

Now what I would like to ask you to do is to transfer your writing instrument to your other hand, and then sign your name. (The reader is again requested to stop and carry out this operation at this time.) OK, everybody done? Come on! Hurry up! What's taking you so long? (Dr. Jossem signs his own name, left-handed, on the overhead transparency.)

As I look at my own signatures with my right and left hands, I would hope that my bank would not accept the second signature. Unless you are ambidextrous, I suspect that most of you have also had difficulty in carrying out this second task.

Now I'd like to ask you to think for a minute about what has just happened here. The hand with which you ordinarily write is an expert at the task. It has done it innumerable times. You say, "Hand, sign my name " and it does it. It's practically a reflex. You don't have to think about what you are doing. But your other hand is probably a novice. It hasn't done this before, or at least not very often. At every point in the process of producing the signature you have to think, "OK, now what do I do?" "What's the next step I have to take?" So, I'd like you to remember this experience the next time you are teaching students and they have difficulty in following what you are doing, or in themselves going through the steps of a problem. Remember that you are an expert, and they are not. It takes time for them to learn. You have to be patient with them. You should *not* say to them, as I just did to you, "Hurry up! What's taking you so long?"

Now I'd like to do another little experiment with you. I have here a piece of clear plastic. I'm going to put it here on the overhead projector so you can see it. As you see, it's flat on the top side and curved on the bottom. I'm going to give it a little push so that it spins around. As you see, it is spinning around a vertical axis in a counterclockwise direction. Let's observe what happens. We see that after I give it a push it spins, but it gradually slows down and comes to a stop. Nothing unexpected, and you all know about friction, so if I say "Why does it slow down and stop?" you can give me an answer. Well, there's friction between the plastic and the surface it is sitting on, and the friction gradually converts into heat the initial energy I gave the piece of plastic, so its rotational energy is gradually decreased and it slows to a stop. OK? We all understand what is going on.

Now I'm going to turn the plastic in the other direction, and now let's observe what happens. (The plastic, spun in the clockwise direction quickly comes to a stop, shudders, and starts to turn in the opposite direction.) Let's try that again! (The procedure is repeated with the same result.)

Well now, what's happening here? A detailed mathematical analysis of this problem has recently been carried out by Sir Herman Bondi and published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London* (Volume A405, 1986, pp. 265-274). Here [redacted] overhead is the first page of his paper. The title reads: "The rigid body dynamics of unidirectional spin," and the abstract reads: "A toy consists of a boat shaped body showing great preference for spin in one direction only. Its sophisticated rigid body dynamics is examined in some detail, and fully accounts for this curious behaviour." Let's look briefly at the other nine pages of the paper. You can get some idea as I show these overhead transparencies of the sophistication and complexity of the mathematics. Here we see how he examines the stability criteria with graphs, and how different things happen if you are in different parts of those graphs. Then here he finally comes to some conclusions that tell you what's going to happen in detail under different sets of initial conditions and circumstances. OK. All understood? Good, then you are all equipped to explain what happens here.

Well, that wasn't really at all fair. So let me try something else with you. I'd like you to imagine that I have here a perfectly flat, level, horizontal, frictionless table. I take a soft drink can, which I'll just show here on the overhead projector as a rectangle since we are looking at it from the side. I don't have a soft drink in the can. What I do have is some compressed air. I also have a tame little demon who sits on the can and opens a hole in the can on command. You all know what's going to happen when he does so. The compressed air rushes out of the hole in the can just like the exhaust out of a rocket. Now what's going to happen to the can? Which way will it move? Will it move to the right or will it move to the left, or will it stay still? I'd like some answers from the audience. How many say it will move to the right? OK. How many say it will move to the left? And how many say it will stand still?

Now I want to do the experiment again. Only this time, instead of having compressed air in the can, I've got a vacuum in the can, I've taken out all the air. My little demon opens up a hole in the can. Now what's going to happen to the can? Will it move this way, or that way, or will it stand still? Physicists in the audience are not to vote, but I'd like to poll the rest of you. How many think it will move this way? How many think it will move that way? And how many think it will stand still? Well, you seem roughly equally divided, so I'll let the different points of view argue it out among themselves. It's a very instructive thing to sit down and argue about what's going to happen there. It tells you what you know or don't know, and understand or don't understand about the concepts, the physical concepts that are involved in understanding what actually happens.

There's a man by the name of C. E. Montague (1969) who wrote a book called *A Writer's Notes on His Trade*. In it he says:

> If you know a thing theoretically but you don't know it practically, you don't really know its whole theory. And if you know it practically but you don't know it theoretically, you don't really know its whole practice.

We are really supposed to be talking about TAs, so I'd like to show you this cartoon. (The cartoon shows a fledgling sitting on the edge of a nest and looking at the mother bird. The caption reads, "Any instructions, or do I just wing it?") I'd like to point out to you that the "TA" in the picture is talking to another bird that it recognizes as an authority figure in the matter. The TAs really have a very difficult job and they are well aware of it. (Another cartoon is shown of a man about to step onto a high tightrope and stopping to polish his glasses.) I think we need to do everything we can to help them. But I am also reminded of William Blake's saying that "He who would do good to another must do it in minute particulars." In physics we have a bit of a pedagogical problem. John Ziman (1968) in his book *Public Knowledge* puts it this way:

> . . . the major task and the corresponding problem of scientific education is easily defined. It must teach the consensus without turning it into an orthodoxy. . . . In a deeply structured discipline such as physics, this is extraordinarily difficult. The classical theory is so complete, so well understood, so total in its applicability, that it is almost inevitably taught as a revealed system. . . .

But one mustn't teach it that way, and the process of *not* teaching it that way is difficult to learn for people who have grown up in the system. (An overhead transparency is shown entitled "Model of Factors Influencing the Learning Process" from N. Entwhistle, 1981, *Styles of Teaching and Learning*.) One can talk to TAs about models of factors influencing the learning process, and about students' characteristics, and the teacher's characteristics, and perceptions of task, and approaches and styles and process, and short term and long term consequences and the feedback loops and all the other aspects of such models. I can tell you that they don't take easily to that, because they don't always see the relevance to what they are being asked to do in an assignment in teaching in the laboratory. If you want their attention, you have to make it relevant to them. William James in his *Talks to Teachers* remarked about how you keep students' attention as you take them from one place to another. What you have to do is to get their attention initially and hold it while you take them step by step from where they are to where you want them to be. Now, in the first place you have to know where *they* are. In the second place you have to know where you want to go. Then you have to carry out that process. James comments that the difference between a good teacher and a bad teacher is in the way they do just that. He says that a good teacher, she will keep the student's interest from point to point, bringing in all kinds of examples, and she will just sparkle in what she does. But a poor teacher, he won't do that, and his presentation will be a dull, leaden and heavy thing.

As you will see from this next transparency, there was a national conference at Berkeley in January 1986 entitled: "Establishing a Research Base for Science Education: Challenges, Trends and Recommendations." I'd like to read with you a little of what they had to say.

> A New View of Teaching: As our understanding of learning and instruction grows, a new view of the teacher's role is emerging. The teacher's perspective about the learner and subject matter determines how the instruction proceeds. Yet teachers receive little guidance while constructing an integrated view of the discipline they teach, the learners they serve, and the institutions employing them. Furthermore, little is known about what constitutes

> effective world views for teaching, or how teachers can help students develop productive beliefs about themselves. Much of teacher education reflects the belief that general pedagogical skills can be applied independent of discipline. The new consensus about the learner suggests that such a belief is unjustified, just as it is unjustified to presume that students can reason about a new discipline without discipline-specific knowledge. Knowledge of the discipline is central to effective pedagogy, for teachers cannot help students recognize flaws in intuitive thinking or introduce concepts without deep understanding of the topics they are asked to teach. Yet teachers often lack even a rudimentary understanding of the topics they must teach. They need time and help to develop a comprehensive view of the subject matter."

And, I may say, experience shows that although the teachers being referred to in this report are secondary school teachers, the remarks are entirely applicable to TAs in physics as well as to those in many other areas.

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E. Leonard Jossem is Professor of Physics at The Ohio State University.

The Role of the Professional Organization in the Development of TAs in Physics

E. Leonard Jossem

The development of any human being is a multifaceted, multilevel, multiply connected network of processes. Since this conference must limit its focus, one obviously cannot consider every aspect of the development of a TA. I will confine my remarks to the subject of TAs in physics, but I would like to use the word "development" in as broad a context as you will allow me. TAs are both students and apprentice teachers, so I would like to include in the discussion items that have long-term as well as short-term pedagogical and professional significance. The TAs of today are the faculty of tomorrow, and they will have to work with the next generation of TAs.

Professional organizations also exist and function at a number of levels, and, here again, I would like to take a broad view. Broadly speaking, professional organizations facilitate the exchange and discussion of information and experience. They collect data, help identify and publicize problems, and serve as a vehicle for group action by their members. They hold meetings, conferences, and workshops, and they publish newsletters, conference proceedings, journals and books. They play a role in the development of a TA in the same sense as they play a role in the continuing development of any of their members. They also play a role in assisting those who have more direct responsibility for the education of the TAs.

Let us look at some examples, starting at the international level. The highest international body concerned with the profession of physics is the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics. It has 19 international commissions in various areas of physics, one of them being the International Commission on Physics Education (ICPE). The ICPE was formed in 1960 and has since that time acted as a catalyst in encouraging the development and improvement of physics education in all its aspects and on an international scale.

Among the more recent conferences and workshops the ICPE has sponsored is the 1978 Oxford Conference on the Role of the Laboratory in Physics Education. At this conference there were specific discussions about TAs as laboratory instructors, and about what one can do to help them with their tasks. In 1980, in Prague, a large part of the conference, The Postgraduate Education of Physicists, was concerned with graduate students as teachers. Also in 1980 in Trieste there was a conference on Education for Physics Teaching. This conference dealt with matters of concern to all physics teachers, including such topics as teaching interactions, students' concepts and misconceptions in physics, assessment and evaluation, and studies of specific problems in physics teaching. Let me just quote the opening sentence from a paper entitled "The Training of University Faculty Members," by P. J. Kennedy : "Only a few years ago it would have been surprising that a conference of this sort should consider not only that university staff could be trained for their teaching roles, but that they should be trained." The paper went on to discuss what could be done to assist university instructional staff, including TAs, in improving their teaching skills.

In 1983 at Pavia there was a conference on Using History in Innovatory Physics Education. The discussions there, useful to faculty and TAs alike, were on how to incorporate history into the teaching of physics. Also in 1983, at La Londe les Maures, there was the first International Workshop on Research in Physics Education. A great deal is yet to be learned about physics education, and the results of this workshop and the activities it engendered are of use to all of us who teach the subject.

Certainly one of the problems that TAs face along with the rest of us is communicating physics, and in 1985 at Duisburg there was a conference on that subject. Most recently there have been international conferences on physics education in Tokyo and in Nanjing where teachers and TAs from east and west have been able to discuss mutual problems.

Another large conference on physics education is scheduled for July 1987 in Mexico. This too will be concerned with the cognitive sciences, with the foundations of physics teaching, with teacher education, and with the results of research in physics education.

Out of all of these conferences come information, ideas, and new points of view. They are carried back to the home institutions of the persons who attend the conferences and are there further diffused to other instructional staff, again including TAs.

Some other international organizations concerned with physics education are: The European Physical Society, The Asian Physical Society, The International Center for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, and GIREP, an international group concerned with research in physics education. These and other professional societies in physics around the world also sponsor meetings and workshops that contribute both indirectly and directly to the education of TAs.

While it is not a professional society, mention ought to be made of UNESCO, which has cooperated with many of these societies and funded many of their activities and publications.

National professional organizations here in the United States are: the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT), American Physical Society (APS), American Institute of Physics (AIP), National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and, from 1960 to 1971, the Commission on College Physics (CCP). The preeminent organization with respect to physics teaching is the AAPT, but each of the others also plays a role in the encouragement of physics teaching and physics teachers.

The AAPT holds two main meetings a year, one of them jointly with the APS. The topic of the education of physics TAs has been a recurring one throughout the history of the AAPT. For example, at a meeting in 1983 the AAPT Committee on Physics and Higher Education sponsored a clinic on training teaching assistants, the objective of which was ". . . to improve the quality of teaching done by TAs." "It provides an opportunity both for those who do not as yet have formal programs and those who do to discuss the potentials and problems of such programs and to obtain assistance either in establishing them or improving them." Again, in June 1986 there was a roundtable discussion of the education of TAs at the AAPT. The abstract describes the nature of the discussion. "The education of the next generation of teachers of physics is a perennial task. A look at history, demographics, and the results of research in physics education can provide a sense of perspective in dealing with the problems of today and tomorrow in this area. Foreign students involved in teaching have cultural and linguistic problems in addition to those problems faced by all teaching assistants. Topics will include orientation, supervision, evaluation, and recognition of teaching assistants."

AAPT also publishes two journals: the *American Journal of Physics* and *The Physics Teacher*. In each of these journals numerous articles have appeared over the years directly related to the education of TAs.

The American Institute of Physics has a Manpower Statistics Division that periodically issues reports of statistics and trends for physics graduate students. These are extremely useful in allowing individual institutions and departments to see their own situations in a national perspective.

Let me finally return to my original comment about professional organizations. They can and do serve many different functions for the profession, and, at least in physics, they are media for the interchange and discussion of ideas and experience, and they serve as vehicles for group action by their members. I have tried to indicate briefly here how they do that with respect to the education of TAs both on a national and an international scale.

E. Leonard Jossem is Professor of Physics at The Ohio State University.

Evaluating TA Development Programs: Problems, Issues, Strategies

Kathleen B. Davey and Curt Marion

Introduction

Participation at this conference is an expression of United States colleges' and universities' increased interest and involvement in activities directed toward supporting and improving the performance of university teaching assistants (TAs). With this increased institutional involvement comes the parallel interest in documenting and evaluating the process and outcomes of TA development activities and programs.

While numerous descriptions of TA training activities and programs have been published in the last 10 to 15 years, several authors have pointed out that few of these reports include evaluative data, and when they do, the data are usually restricted to interview or questionnaire data from TAs (Carroll, 1980; Rosenshine, 1974; McNeil and Popham, 1973).

Carroll's (1980) article on the "Effects of Training Programs for University Teaching Assistants" is probably the most comprehensive published analysis of evaluation studies on TA training programs. He reviewed the literature and identified: (a) 48 studies that essentially simply described TA training programs; (b) 16 studies that attempted to measure the effects of training on TA variables such as knowledge, attitudes, or behavior; and (c) 17 studies that attempted to measure the effects of TA training on undergraduate student variables such as student evaluations of teaching, student attitudes, or test scores.

Carroll also categorized according to design the studies that focused on TA or student variables. He identified and summarized the findings of one correlational, 11 preexperimental, 7 quasiexperimental, and 15 true experimental studies. He concludes that we have spent far too little effort assessing the effects of our training programs and recommends that "researchers should strive to assign TAs randomly to experimental conditions, to measure student variables as well as TA variables, and to obtain reliable observational data on the TAs' teaching behavior" (p. 178). He goes on to say that "whenever possible, it is also advisable, in order to gain statistical precision, to obtain pre-training measures of dependent variables and to employ analysis of covariance to adjust for initial differences between groups" (p. 179).

Carroll's conclusions and recommendations are well taken. Obviously, a major goal of all TA training programs is to positively affect the teaching performance of TAs and, thus, the experiences of their students. It is also true that, strictly speaking, in order to empirically "test" the effects of training, we would need to employ an experimental design and adhere to all of the premises and "rules" associated with such a methodology. However, it is our opinion that, except perhaps in very limited situations, such an approach is not practical. Furthermore, as a single methodology it is not even desirable, because it cannot adequately serve the multiple purposes of most TA training program evaluations.

These conclusions are derived primarily from our involvement in an evaluation study of a university-wide training program. We will describe the problems and issues we encountered, our strategies for dealing with them, and our recommendations for collecting information that might serve the multiple stakeholders in TA training efforts.

Background of the Evaluation Study

In late summer of 1985, our university was planning its fourth annual university-wide TA workshop. Participation was open to all TAs, but not all of the more than 2,000 TAs within the university had ever attended the workshop. The first offering in 1982 was attended by approximately 75 TAs from eight departments in four colleges. Preregistrations for the 1985 workshop came from 54 departments in 13 colleges and included approximately 450 TAs. Participation was considered voluntary, but some departments had begun to require their first-year TAs to attend the workshop. While these increased enrollments were encouraging from an institutional perspective, they made the organization of the workshop and any related program evaluation exceedingly complex.

The workshop, as usual, was to be held for five half-days during the week preceding autumn quarter. The exact curriculum, workshop presenters, and structure had varied only slightly from year to year. For example, the workshop had always included some combination of small- and large-group presentations on subjects such as pedagogy, adult and personal development, and course design and evaluation, presented primarily by College of Education faculty. The TAs also had the opportunity to participate in microteaching sessions.

In addition to the university-wide workshop, it was known that several departments on campus conducted training or orientation activities of their own. However, a focused and systematic survey of TA development activities and needs across the university had never been conducted, nor had any university office maintained a database specific to TA employment, assignments, roles, and development opportunities or experiences.

For the first three years of the university-wide workshop, the main evaluation tool was a questionnaire that was distributed to the TAs on the last day of the workshop. It essentially asked what they liked most and least, and what recommendations they would make for future offerings. No attempts had been made to collect data from the TAs after they had been functioning as TAs, from the students taught by the TAs, nor from in-class observations.

We were members of a university-wide instructional development and evaluation unit that had assisted in the planning and implementation of workshop activities. We were asked by the central administration to evaluate the 1985 workshop offering, which was funded by the central administration and organized by the College of Education.

Problems and Issues

The problems and issues that we encountered in planning and conducting an evaluation of this TA development program were not unlike those associated with any program evaluation study. The fundamental concerns became: For what purpose(s) and for whom are we conducting the inquiry? What are the most important questions and issues to be addressed through the study? How can we efficiently collect reliable information that is valid and sufficient for informing the decision-makers who will use the information? What is the best process for communicating the findings? Does the potential value of the information to be collected merit the costs associated with conducting the evaluation?

In this paper, we will discuss each of these areas of concern as they applied to designing and conducting the evaluation of this workshop.

For what purpose and for whom is the evaluation being conducted?

The program evaluation literature is replete with articles on the differences between the goals and processes involved in conducting formative versus summative evaluations, with formative evaluations directed toward collecting information to help program staff improve and develop the program, and summative evaluations directed toward collecting information to help administrators assess the worthiness of the program. The ultimate goal of both types of evaluation is future program planning.

As evaluators we were faced with the classic dilemma of wanting to serve the information needs of two masters: (a) the workshop organizers and presenters, of which we were a part, and (b) the central administration who had requested the evaluation. These types of role conflicts are common when program evaluations are being conducted by parties from within the organization. Some would argue that "objectivity" is lost by not having totally neutral evaluators. It is our conclusion that more is gained by having evaluators who are eminently aware of the context within which a program occurs and are involved to some degree in the important phases of program development.

Our role as part of the workshop planning team and as presenters within the workshop provided us the advantage of gaining first-hand experience with the workshop, from planning through implementation. It also provided us access to information that would have been difficult to attain if we had been viewed as simply "outside" evaluators. Considering the information needs of both the workshop organizers and the university administrators when designing the evaluation study allowed us to double-up on the information collected at a single time from any given source. The trickiest part of this approach proved to be the issue of: What information do we share with whom and through what process? This will be dealt with in more detail when we discuss the issue of communicating the evaluation findings and recommendations. Let us now turn to one of the first hurdles in any program evaluation–defining the general questions and issues that will be addressed through the study.

What are the most important questions and issues to be addressed through the study?

We first listed all of the major stakeholders in the university-wide workshop: undergraduate students, TAs, departments, colleges, the College of Education, and the central administration. We then identified questions that we thought each group might have about the training provided through the workshop. We very quickly had at least 10 pages of *general* evaluation questions. It was clear that, unless we wanted to hire a team of evaluators or spend the next several years collecting and analyzing data, we could never meet the information interests of all of these groups. We decided to focus on the two most immediate stakeholders–the central administration and the College of Education. We decided the interests of the TAs, departments, colleges, and undergraduate students would be served, at least indirectly, by the information interests of these other two parties.

The next major design issue became: Should we treat the workshop as an isolated organizational event and collect information internal to the happenings of the workshop only? Or should we attempt to collect information that would allow the workshop to be judged in relationship to its place within the context of the organization (e.g., in relation to specific TA role assignments within departments and other TA training events)? Since the workshop was originally sponsored as a response to a perceived university-wide need for TA training, we opted for the second approach. We felt it was only reasonable for one general goal of the evaluation to be an assessment of how adequately the training provided through the workshop was meeting TA training needs university-wide.

In order to address this issue we needed to know, at a minimum:

1. How many graduate students held TA appointments within the university during the quarter the workshop was offered?
2. How were these appointments distributed across departments and colleges?
3. What percentage of these TAs attended the university-wide workshop?
4. Were there other TA training activities going on across the campus? If so, what was included in them? Who offered them? Who participated in them?

In addition, we needed to know:

1. Who participated in the workshop and what was their pattern of attendance?
2. How did the workshop participants compare to the university-wide TA population according to demographic data?
3. What did the TAs and departments expect from the university-wide workshop? Were these expectations met?
4. Was the workshop organization, structure and curriculum appropriate given the participants? If not, how might it be improved?

This question led us to ask two related questions:

1. What are the actual tasks TAs are expected to perform in their resident departments, and how, or might, these be used when designing TA training curricula?
2. What are the TA supervision and performance evaluation practices within departments, and what implications do these hold when considering TA training programs?

And, of course, the "ultimate" question as outlined by Carroll: What were the actual effects of the training on TA performance and on the undergraduate students taught by TAs?

This definition of general questions and issues led us to the program evaluation problem of how to collect valid and reliable information for addressing these questions.

How can we efficiently and reliably collect information that is valid and sufficient for informing the decision-makers who will use it?

Given the breadth of our evaluation questions, we obviously had to consult multiple sources and use multiple methodologies. We had to collect information from the TAs, the students they taught, workshop presenters and organizers, department representatives, and university documents and databases. As Guba (1981) suggests, we were "triangulating" our data and methods. In so doing, we were contributing to the complexity of, and required resources for, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. But we were also adding to the potential usefulness of the information and increasing the possible confidence that we and others could have in our findings and recommendations. Perhaps most importantly, we were considering and including the perspectives of the many parties involved in and affected by the training program as sources of evaluation information.

As stated earlier, our institution, like most, did not have a database designed to maintain records on our TA population by department, assignments, roles, teaching experience, or participation in training. So we worked with our personnel services office to create a computer report of the number of TAs by department and country of origin. This served to at least describe our TA population according to two important variables.

We then designed a preworkshop questionnaire to collect demographic data from workshop participants. The participants were asked to indicate their department, age, sex, first language, country of origin, years as a TA, graduate student rank, years of teaching experience, types of previous teaching experience, types of previous TA training, previous participation in any formal workshops or courses on teaching, and specific role assignment as a TA.

The data collection procedures further included plans to:

1. Review university documents/reports that might pertain to TA development activities, e.g., annual reports of colleges that might describe departmental TA development activities;
2. Review workshop registration and attendance records;
3. Survey departmental representatives prior to the workshop and ask them to describe their expectations for the workshop;
4. Survey workshop participants immediately following the workshop and ask them to rate the importance/usefulness and perceived quality of each workshop activity, and to make recommendations for future offerings;
5. Have the participants complete 3x5 cards each day and indicate any thoughts or feelings that they would like to communicate to the workshop organizers;
6. Have the participants keep a log of "reflective notes" and turn them in at the end of the workshop if they wished;
7. Have the large- and small-group presenters complete a survey and note their observations/recommendations for future offerings;
8. Interview a sample of workshop participants at the end of their first quarter and assess their perceptions of the value of the workshop after they had been functioning as TAs for at least a quarter; and
9. Assess supervision and performance evaluation practices in a sample of departments with TAs.

Finally, we intended to select a sample of TAs who participated in the training and a sample of TAs who did not participate in the training, to match them according to important variables such as teaching experience and training, country of origin, department/discipline, TA role, class size and course level, etc., and compare, among other things, their students' ratings of their performance at the end of autumn quarter and the following winter quarter.

Some of these efforts were easier or more successful for collecting information than others. For example, the 3x5 cards were not administered with any sort of consistency. So, while the comments were often interesting, the cards were not considered to be reliable sources of evaluative information. The reflective logs were turned in by only 10 participants, and most of these participants used the booklets to take notes on the general sessions rather than to record personal reflections that might have been useful for evaluation purposes.

All of the other methodologies and information sources produced information that was analyzed and summarized in the final evaluation report *except* our attempt at designing and conducting a study of the actual effects of TA training on TA performance and student outcomes as called for by Carroll. This methodology proved to be impractical for several reasons.

First, TAs would need to be randomly assigned to a control group and an experimental group–with one group composed of training participants and the other nonparticipants–in order to meet the requirements of an experimental design. This condition alone was difficult to meet, because not all TAs who attended the training received the same "treatment." The small-group sessions were conducted by 20 different mentors. In addition, not all participants attended all workshop sessions, nor did they all attend for the full five half-days. Also, some TAs were required by their departments to attend the workshop, and others were not. Therefore, there was a self-selection factor operating for at least a portion of the participants.

Even if random assignment to groups could have been met, there was an even more serious practical consideration. The number of variables affecting teaching performance are innumerable. At a minimum we know that previous teaching experience, country of origin, departmental training and supervision, and role assignment must be controlled if we are to reliably and validly measure the effects of a particular training program. We had hoped we could define these factors for each TA and then select matched samples according to these TA characteristics. Unfortunately, by the time these variables were accounted for, it was impossible to select a large enough sample of TAs in each group to make the study feasible.

We have therefore concluded that, except in situations in which one can tightly control the selection of participants and training "treatment," an experimental design is not feasible for the purpose of program evaluation. These controlled conditions do not occur very often in complex organizations. Nor are they very desirable when actually trying to meet the development needs of TAs.

What is the best process for communicating the findings and recommendations?

First, I mentioned that we discovered that one of the trickiest issues faced in this evaluation study was what information to share with whom, through what process and in what format. Part of the reason for this was our dual role with the training program, and the fact that we were interested in providing information that would be viewed as useful to both the program staff and central administrators. It also can be attributed to a general issue faced in program evaluation studies–program justification.

Although program improvement and planning are the espoused evaluation goals, they are in fact seldom the *only* goals, and often not the primary ones. *Program justification* is usually equally dominant, though often unstated, as a purpose. The point is that, at a minimum, when it comes time to report evaluation findings and recommendations, the issue of program justification often arises. For ethical purists, this is a difficult reality to accept. In our opinion, it appears naive to do otherwise.

We have no formulas for solving this dilemma. At a minimum, it seems important to be aware of, and sensitive to, the feelings surrounding this reality. It seems important to work with program staff and to let them, at the very least, review any evaluation reports before they are shared with administrators or funding sources. While the persons conducting the evaluation must be careful not to shape their report to simply accommodate the wishes of the program staff, we think they should listen to staff concerns, if there are any, and to at least review the report "one more time" before it is given to people outside of the program.

In our experience, group discussions and presentations of evaluation results are an important part of communicating the information. Efforts should be taken to provide a well-rounded description of the program and its effects–not just its weaknesses and failures. We would also recommend the old standby, patience. If you have tried your best to conduct a fair and reasoned evaluation study, then give program staff a little time to "digest" the information. Their initial reaction may understandably be defensive, but over time they may come to see the report as valuable feedback rather than as criticism.

Does the potential value of the information collected merit the costs associated with conducting the evaluation study?

Finally, we must always assess and reassess whether the potential value of the information to be collected merits the costs associated with conducting the evaluation. The amount of resources put into a training program can be used as a gauge for judging the amount of resources merited to conduct an evaluation. When calculating program costs, we must remember to factor in the TAs' time; the time of the program planners, organizers, and presenters; costs of materials; and projected costs over time.

We would not recommend that all TA training programs be evaluated as extensively as this one every time training occurs. Just as there is such a thing as "overtreatment" in the medical profession, there is such a thing as "overevaluation." There are also such things as "undertreatment" and "underevaluation." At the risk of sounding reductionistic, it does seem important to continuously strive for a reasonable balance. For example, it seems reasonable to extensively evaluate a program as large as the university-wide workshop at least every few years. It does not seem reasonable to turn every training activity or offering into a miniexperiment.

Summary

There are few variables related to TA training in the university that can be isolated and precisely "measured." The evaluation of TA training eventually comes down to human beings struggling with perceptual issues of value and worth. In so doing they must struggle with the question of valuable to whom and for what purpose. There are certainly some important observable, measurable facts that can be documented and used as partial evidence in this judgment process. There are also multiple opinions, attitudes, and experiences that can be documented and used as additional evidence.

Even so, the decisions surrounding the planning and implementation of, and resources allocated to, TA training programs are never totally "data-based." Nor is it realistic to think that it is possible to collect evidence or "data" that will show us exactly what we should or should not do. But we can continuously assume a position of information seekers–to take the time to examine what we are doing, how we are doing it and why we think it is important enough to do. And, finally, we can force ourselves and others to document and consider multiple perspectives when considering questions related to the value and worth of particular TA training programs.

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Kathleen B. Davey is Senior Associate and Curt Marion is a Graduate Research Associate in the Center for Teaching Excellence at The Ohio State University.

4. Approaches to TA Development

Introduction

Those involved in promoting the development of TAs as teachers know from experience that the effectiveness of specific approaches is very much determined by their appropriateness in a given situation. The needs of a TA who has never taught before are quite different from those of one who has taught for the previous 10 years at a community college. TAs functioning in laboratory situations require different immediate pedagogical skills than those who are routinely lecturing to large classes. A TA in dance is more concerned with evaluating students through performance testing than with grading essay examinations reliably.

The experienced mentor, supervisor, or developer, therefore, adopts an eclectic stance, building up a full repertoire of approaches that can be adapted to the climate and structure of the university or department and the teaching roles, personalities, previous teaching experience, and immediate and long-term needs of the particular TAs being served.

The papers in this section document a myriad of approaches that can be a part of that repertoire. As a group, they are testimony to the belief that TA development involves several functions and a variety of delivery modes: presenting particular teaching skills through workshop demonstrations or printed handbooks; providing opportunities for practice and feedback through microteaching or role playing; rewarding TA performance through certificate and awards programs; fostering communication and awareness through newsletters and course manuals; encouraging reflection on teaching issues through seminars or inquiry; offering specific help and guidance through mentoring or consultation.

The papers also show great variety in the scope of the particular approaches described. They range from university-wide awards programs and large general orientation workshops to individual peer consultations in specific courses. For purposes of organization, they are arranged in this section into two general categories: university-wide and departmental programs.

University-Wide Programs

Encouraging and rewarding TAs to make efforts to improve their teaching are issues addressed by William Davis, who suggests that certificates may be used effectively to document TA participation in development programs, and by Thomas Langford, who describes how a rewards program can reinforce teaching efforts.

John Boehrer offers suggestions for providing TAs with feedback on their teaching using videotaped segments of their teaching. This technique is an essential component of many of the approaches described throughout the section. The use of print materials in TA development is treated by Judy Bailey, who talks about the preparation of TA handbooks, and Laura Border, who discusses TA newsletters.

Jody Nyquist and Donald Wulff provide an example of a comprehensive TA development program that relies on a discipline-specific approach in a large university setting, while Linc. Fisch presents a model based on interdepartmental cooperation that is particularly suited to small institutions or departments. William Jackson describes a central program designed to complement departmental efforts.

The conceptualization and organizational tasks involved in offering a large university-wide general workshop are discussed by Nancy Zimpher and Suzan Yessayan and Joanne Martin-Reynolds and Marian Hurley. Lee Humphreys and Howard Altman describe programs that are based on large orientation workshops with a program of follow-up activities throughout the academic year.

The college teaching seminar as a vehicle for TA pedagogical development is described in papers by Delivee Wright and Frank Vattano and Jack Avens, who provide overviews of course objectives, organization, and activities.

Christine Farris addresses the specific subject of helping TAs respond to student writing, describing a discipline-specific approach to enabling TAs to design and evaluate written assignments and activities. She encourages the use of peer consultation in writing, an approach that others also advocate as useful in consultations about teaching. Kate Brinko, John Habel, and Billiee Pendleton-Parker describe programs that involve TAs as peer consultants for other TAs in the context of TA development activities at their institutions.

Departmental Programs

The use of both student and TA peer consultation is also at the heart of the writing program described by Sara Stelzner, Karen Strickland, and Paul Puccio, who illustrate how different components of a program can be integrated conceptually and logistically. Also writing from the perspective of a writing program, Anita Gandolfo talks about the use of student manuals to assist TAs in their teaching and maintain a level of common experience for undergraduates in multisection courses.

In describing their programs, Darwin Hayes and Sally Taylor focus on the internship approach used in composition courses, stressing the advantages that careful and gradual introduction to teaching and mentoring through the early learning process have for the teaching assistant. James Henke offers an overview of another composition program and writing center, providing details on how an ongoing practicum is used to support and develop the teaching practice of TAs.

Three elements that are frequently a part of comprehensive departmental programs–the orientation workshop, the practicum combined with faculty supervision, and the college teaching methods course–are described by Cathy Pons, speaking within the context of a foreign language department. The use of focused observation and materials review are particular facets of this program that build in occasions for the extended interaction between TAs, peers, and supervisors that is central to effective ongoing development.

Linda Morton, Phil Huneke, Sia Wong, and Joseph Fiedler report on the discussion that took place at the mathematics roundtable at the conference, addressing such issues as recruitment, screening, and supervision and describing the programs that are in place in the mathematics departments at their institutions. John Bauman and Wendy Walton-Sonntag offer a report of the chemistry roundtable, at which discussion centered on international teaching assistants, laboratory safety, and the TA programs at three universities.

Summary

Although many of the approaches that are described in this section are familiar to those involved in TA development programs, there are throughout these papers fresh variations and recombinations that inspire new thinking or give existing ideas a concreteness that enables one to envision how they might be implemented. For those who have not yet tried or entertained these approaches, the papers provide a wealth of information grounded in actual experience. For all, the presentation of these approaches in writing brings them to a level of articulation that permits more systematic examination, dialogue, and dissemination–goals that were central to the impetus for holding a national conference.

–Nancy Chism

TA Training: Professional Development for Future Faculty

William E. Davis

Teaching assistant training will at best achieve only moderate success. While there will always be a number of shining stars who become very involved in teaching improvement programs and take advantage of every opportunity to improve in their TA role, a large proportion of TAs will remain nonparticipants, uninterested in our programs, and unchanged by our efforts.

Why? Because teaching assistants have a shortsighted view of the role of a TA and the standard approach to TA training reinforces this view. The view of TAs is shortsighted because, in many cases, they see the position primarily as a job, a source of financial support. Among the academic priorities of many TAs, teaching plays a very secondary role to course work and research. They think the tasks they perform (and those we in our training programs urge them to strive to improve) are merely the labor-intensive parts of teaching, much of which can accurately be described as sheer drudgery. Leading discussions on someone else's lecture material is usually the intellectual highlight of being a TA. The tasks of marking tests and term papers, maintaining and organizing laboratory supplies, keeping grade records, and holding office hours consume a major amount of the TA's time. And as a job, the TAship is undoubtedly short-term. In fact, the highest priority of graduate students is to achieve the status that makes them no longer eligible for the job–that is, to receive their degrees.

So, expecting those with this understanding of the TA position to participate in training activities amounts to expecting them to invest time and energy into improving themselves in low prestige, busy work, dead-end jobs that everyone knows will only be short-term commitments.

Many readers will be thinking that the views I am presenting, while for the most part accurate, are highly pessimistic and, more importantly, do not provide the complete picture. Undoubtedly, many TAs do feel they are only doing a job and they do not actively seek training to improve, but many others are very concerned about the quality of their teaching and they are actively involved in improving themselves as instructors. And, while the tasks that TAs perform may be time-consuming, these tasks are essential parts of college and university teaching.

I agree. As I said, there are the shining stars and many lesser stars who are very serious about their teaching. They are very anxious to learn because they see themselves as preparing for obtaining and then succeeding in future faculty positions. And therein lies the solution to the problem of reaching many of those uninterested nonparticipants who, if they do not become interested, guarantee that TA training programs will have only moderate success.

Too many TAs do not recognize that they are in a career transition step between student and faculty status, and therefore they do not take advantage of the opportunities available for obtaining or enhancing important career skills. The current narrow concept of TA training does not emphasize enough the value of the TA experience as an important part in the professional preparation of future faculty members. TA training programs simply do not connect with the career objectives of most graduate students. Even the title, *TA* training, clearly indicates that the activities are job related, not career related.

Viewing TAs as future faculty who want and need programs of professional development in college and university teaching is not unwarranted. A major proportion of recipients of doctorates do expect teaching to be their primary postdoctoral work (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, Sept. 12, 1984). For all fields, 39% indicated teaching as their future work, compared to 25% who expected their work to be research and development. In some disciplines, the teaching percentage is much higher; 73% of the recipients of doctorates in the arts and humanities expect teaching to be their primary postdoctoral work. Because of this, our efforts to improve the teaching of TAs should be based on the idea of supplying professional development opportunities to future faculty, not on the idea of training graduate students in a job for which they are doing their best to become ineligible.

The University of California, Davis, has developed as part of its activities for TAs a program that follows the concept of future faculty development. The program is based on a series of presentations by faculty and visiting scholars called "A Closer Look at University Teaching." Presentations in the series cover basic skills, such as lecturing, testing, and discussion leading, and also introduce issues and ideas important to professional educators, such as student cheating, gender influences on teaching, and values and ethics in the classroom.

Certainly many campuses have similar speaker series, but we feel we have been very successful in attracting audiences because the series is promoted as a professional and career development program for graduate students who plan to obtain faculty positions at colleges or universities upon completion of their degrees. As a result of the emphasis on professional preparation, over 200 graduate students participated in this teaching improvement program during the 1985-86 academic year.

"Closer Look" participants are not only introduced to teaching skills and important educational issues by distinguished faculty members, but those who attend eight presentations in the series also receive a certificate of completion that can appropriately be used in curricula vitae and educational placement files. The certificate is tangible recognition of an interest in teaching and in personal teaching improvement, something that educational placement personnel feel is important for anyone who intends to pursue an academic career. Ninety-two participants received a certificate of completion for the 1985-86 series.

To evaluate the program at the end of the 1985-86 year, we asked certificate recipients to answer several questions. They almost unanimously rated the presentations as very valuable to them. When asked how much the possibility of receiving a certificate influenced their decision to attend the presentations, only one-quarter of them indicated little or no influence. The emphasis on preparation for future faculty positions–and more specifically, a chance to obtain recognition that might help them to obtain that first position–brought nearly 70 graduate students to participate in a program for teaching improvement. After only three presentations in the 1986-87 "Closer Look" series, 75 graduate students are participating. Twelve or more presentations will be offered during the course of the year, and all presentations will be videotaped (three videotape viewings can be counted), so more will undoubtedly begin working toward their certificates. Last year a large number began attending during winter quarter.

The University of California at Davis is continuing to consider plans for improving the way future faculty are prepared for their careers. A special university work group made up of the deans of all the undergraduate colleges, the graduate division, the chairs of the Academic Senate's Committee on Teaching, the Committee on Educational Policy, and various administration members are charged with proposing new directions in the area of preparation of graduate students as future college and university instructors. One of the options that they will be considering will be the development of a comprehensive, university approved postsecondary teacher training program. The components of such a program could include: (a) a minimum period of classroom teaching under the supervision of a teaching mentor; (b) completion of a regularly scheduled course on college and university teaching; (c) a field experience that would provide an introduction to teaching at state and community colleges as compared to their teaching experiences at the University of California; and (d) attendance at a minimum number of presentations in the "Closer Look at University Teaching" series.

Since the work group is considering ways to strengthen the program, certificate recipients who evaluated the current program were asked if they would have participated if the elements (a), (b), and (c) above had been required. The results were: 87% would have worked with a faculty member who would act as a teaching mentor; 78% would have taken a course on college and university teaching; and 70% would have participated if visits to other types of institutions had been required. These answers indicate a very positive response of graduate students to teaching improvement activities when the emphasis is on helping them to prepare for future faculty careers.

The success of the certificate program indicates that we can improve teaching assistant training programs by emphasizing the role that teaching improvement activities play in preparing graduate students to both obtain and succeed in future faculty positions. Programs such as the "Closer Look at University Teaching" series emphasize the graduate student's career goals and in doing so complement training programs that focus on the more limited, though also important, job concerns. While not specifically designated as TA training activities, programs that involve graduate students in activities designed to prepare them for future careers as college or university faculty will also help to improve the quality of their current teaching as teaching assistants.

William E. Davis is Director of the Teaching Resources Center at the University of California, Davis.

Recognizing Outstanding Teaching

Thomas A. Langford

Most of us are aware of the frequent problem of low morale among teaching assistants. They tend to see themselves as "cheap labor" and typically feel that their universities fail to demonstrate much appreciation for their services. They are often made the "whipping boys" of disgruntled parents, legislators, and marginal students. In most cases they are renumerated at a level far beneath their worth to the university and they frequently go without the benefits that regular faculty are given simply by virtue of position. Given the nature and structures of graduate education, most of these negative factors are not likely to change, at least not substantially. However, there are some things the universities can do to help with the problem, even when resources for change are in short supply. I will relate one practice in our institution that might be of interest to anyone seeking to improve TA image and morale.

In 1974, the Graduate School at Texas Tech initiated a program to recognize outstanding graduate student teachers. The dean felt that a small amount of money could accomplish several very significant results for improvement of our graduate student teaching program:

1. Demonstrate the university's commitment to good teaching;
2. Create a significant annual award to be sought after by graduate student teachers; and
3. Provide a record of distinction that would be useful to graduates seeking employment.

In order to make the awards as meaningful as possible, the dean arranged for them to be made in a letter from the president that included a token check of $100. The president, in fact, has funded the awards from the beginning, the dean having convinced him of the value of such activity.

We feel that the significance of the award is not in the token amount of money (though any graduate student is always glad to get even that), but in the recognition that it conveys. The listing of the awards on the students' resumes is a significant indication of their quality as teachers, as judged by those faculty and students they have worked with. Since 1974, we have made 146 of these awards, an average of 11 each year.

Departments are selected each year for the competition based on the number of doctoral level teaching assistants they have. In general, we include only those departments that have 10 or more doctoral students. Once this determination is made, the Graduate School sends out a letter requesting nominations of each department's choice, allowing departments to determine the method by which their individual nominees are selected. Some select by faculty nominations and vote, others involve student evaluations. The selections are made in the spring each year so that the award may be made before the end of the school year.

One rather interesting fact, in view of the frequent criticism of international teaching assistants, is the number of times international students have been selected for the award. Such selections help to prove our contention that such students, contrary to popular campus rumor, are often among our best teachers.

The program has been more successful and popular than even anticipated at the beginning. One evidence of this is the fact that nearly all the departments involved have since established their own similar awards at the master's level. This has engendered considerable visibility and respect for good teaching and our teaching assistants work for the awards rather enthusiastically. We publicize the results of the competition each year and make as much of the awards as we can.

We feel very good about the program, that it has accomplished so much with so little outlay in terms of money. It has cost the Graduate School nothing, in fact, since the president's office provides the money for the doctoral awards and the departments take care of the master's level awards. But it is our conviction that anything we can do to call attention to and reward good teaching is very worthwhile, especially at a time when the whole teaching assistantship system is being called in question.

It is our conviction that some of our very best teaching is done by teaching assistants. Our awards program tries to call attention to that fact.

Thomas A. Langford is Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Texas Tech University.

Suggestions for Watching Tapes with TAs

John Boehrer

The use of videotape to provide feedback to teaching assistants has become widespread. This use may range from taping short prepared teaching segments, as in various forms of microteaching, to live taping of entire class sessions. Instructional developers and faculty supervisors, as well as teaching assistants themselves, routinely attest to the effectiveness of videotaping as a means for providing powerful opportunities to assess and improve teaching performance.

Videotaping involves obtaining resources for recording teaching segments in both studio and classroom situations. The services of competent persons who can operate the equipment and obtain good results are also essential. A third requirement is the need for skilled staff to help in providing useful guidance as TAs watch the videotapes of their teaching. Since this is the component of the videotaping process that has the greatest impact on teaching improvement, great care should be exercised in making it as positive and productive as possible. Some guidelines for doing so, based on our experience at the Harvard-Danforth Video Lab, are offered below.

Objectives:

To mediate the TAs' experiences of seeing and hearing themselves.
To help the TAs to understand and deal with what is going on in the class.

In general:

Encourage the TAs to make independent observations.
Observe and discuss the TAs' teaching in the most concrete terms possible.
Incorporate student feedback into discussion if available.
Support the TAs' positive self-evaluation. Distinguish skills and choices from qualities and abilities.

Tune in with the TAs, and adjust your approach accordingly:

Is he or she nervous? Defensive? Distracted? Time-pressured?
What do teaching in general and this class in particular have to do with this TA?
Why is this TA here to watch this tape now?

Set the agenda:

What problem, concern, interest, or goal applies to the tape?
What specific purpose can you and the TA use the tape to pursue?
Orient the TAs: Have they ever seen themselves on video?
Watching oneself is highly subjective; invite the TAs to test their reactions.
Invite the TAs to show you their tapes and explain the class.

Check in early:

Ask the TAs to tell you their reactions to seeing and hearing themselves.
Give your own reaction to the same data; offer perspective.

Focus the TA's attention on the students:

How well does the TA know them and understand their perspective?
What are the TA's attitudes and expectations about the students?
Encourage empathy with their needs and problems.

Collaborate with the TA on watching the tape:

Connect observations with the purpose you have formulated.
Advocate as well as inquire: Give your views and invite the TA to respond to them.
Work with the TA to define problems and generate alternatives.

Help the TA to assess the class:

What specific objectives did the TA have for this class?
How does the organization and conduct of the class relate to the TA?
How do the TA's words and actions relate to the students?
What are reliable indicators of meeting the objectives?

Emphasize good practice; for example:

Setting a clear direction; engaging students in active participation; assigning clear tasks; asking focused questions; giving summaries; using feedback devices.

Help the TA use the watching of the tape to improve:

Ask for TA's perceptions of own strengths and needs to improve.
Review alternatives and solutions to problems noticed.
Help the TA articulate specific, limited goals as operational statements about the next class.

Arrange follow-up:

Make an agreement with the TA to have a brief conversation after his or her next class to review the results of your collaborative work with the tape.

John Boehrer is Associate Director of the Harvard Danforth Video Laboratory, Harvard University.

TA Handbooks: What Should They Include?

Judy G. Bailey

Handbooks for teaching assistants are popular vehicles for conveying information on policies, procedures, and teaching techniques, quickly disseminating large amounts of information to many people. Their primary functions are to help TAs understand what is expected of them and to acquaint them with necessary logistics. As a supplement to campus-wide or department level orientation and development sessions, handbooks may provide readings and handouts in a readily available collection. Distribution of materials in handbook form increases the efficiency of orientation and development programs. Compiling a handbook can be an overwhelming task, but it can be simplified if approached in a systematic way using the following guidelines.

Planning

Personnel. It is recommended that a core group of faculty and TA development specialists, TA supervisors, and experienced and new TAs be involved in the early stages of handbook planning. Others who are interested in helping with the task, such as experts in teaching or in a specific discipline, may also be included.

Establishing the purpose. The first task of the planning group is to determine what TA needs there are and whether or not a handbook will help meet one or more of the needs. For many schools the purpose of the handbook is to supplement a TA conference, provide information, or make sure the "rules" are in the hands of the TAs.

Defining the scope. Issues of topic inclusion or exclusion may be determined by answering the following questions within the context of your established purpose.

1. What topics are "essential" as opposed to "nice to know"?
2. What is an optimum length? Long documents may seem so overwhelming to new TAs that they will be unused.
3. What is an appropriate sequence for the material?

Choosing content. Resources on various topics abound, and permission to reprint or adapt articles and handouts is usually easy to obtain. When using reprints, ***obtain written permission*** from the original source and give appropriate credit. In order to tailor a handbook to your particular situation, you may find original writing to be best for several of the topics.

Getting to press. By this time one person should be in charge of coordinating the final stages of arranging materials, formatting, arranging for typing, editing, printing, and making design and graphics decisions. Choose someone with a reputation for following through and completing projects. Decisions related to appropriate covers and bindings will depend partly on available funding and partly on intended use. If the handbook is in loose-leaf format, for example, it is easy to add specific materials relevant to the department or discipline.

Costs of developing, printing, and disseminating TA handbooks will vary widely from one school to another. Whether to use offset printing and staples or to include professional graphics, photography, and color are decisions each school will need to make. Sharing printing costs among several units may be a solution to funding. In several institutions costs are shared by graduate and college deans, department chairs, teaching centers, and/or provosts.

Disseminating. Many schools distribute the handbooks at orientation sessions held before the autumn semester. Others mail them to all new TAs. At the University of Delaware the handbooks are distributed at the annual TA conference in September. In addition, many workshop facilitators refer participants to appropriate sections for handout materials. The UD handbook is also available to new faculty, TA supervisors, and others who request copies.

Revising and evaluating. Once a version of your handbook is published, you will need to develop a system for updating the information before each printing. Several institutions use a word processing system, saving valuable time in the revision process and helping to keep the handbooks current and useful. More sophisticated technology makes it possible to send material to the printer on diskettes. Another feature of some handbooks is a feedback form on the last page, which typically asks users which sections were most and least helpful, which topics were omitted and should be included, and to give suggestions for the next version.

Typical Handbook Content

Before we developed the University of Delaware *Handbook for Teaching Assistants*, several TA handbooks from other institutions were studied. Typical categories of information that emerged were:

Letter from the editor and foreword . A statement of the purpose, its intended audience, and information on how to get the most from the handbook helps to set the tone.

Title page. In addition to the title, this page also identifies the developers and/or editors.

Table of contents. This is a standard practice and is used for quick reference.

Administrative issues. Topics dealing with graduate policies and procedures, conditions of employment, work load, benefits (i.e., stipends, tuition fee waivers, health services, taxation), grievance procedures, and graduate student associations (where such exist) are usually included in this section. Policies such as sexual harassment and equal treatment of handicapped and minority students may be located either in this or another section. For example, academic dishonesty policies sometimes appeared here and sometimes in sections dealing with testing and grading.

Since there are potential legal implications of the information included in this section (i.e., implied contracts), *careful editing* is a must!

TA relationships. Such sections usually deal with TA relationships with faculty supervisors, departments, and students. Sexual harassment policies occasionally appear in this section rather than in the "administrative issues" section.

Instructional responsibilities. General information describing the importance of the role of the TA and typical duties are usually included here. Such topics as office hours, grading, lab assisting, discussion, recitation or review sections, and full course responsibilities are typically found in this section.

Professional teaching issues and strategies. Ranging from tips on how to motivate students to ideas for evaluating and improving one's teaching, this section is often referred to as "Teaching Tips." In the handbooks reviewed the following topics appeared most frequently:

Ideas for the First Day of Class
Using Office Hours Effectively
Conducting Discussion Sessions
Running Science Laboratories
Writing Test Items
Establishing a Grading System
Tips for Grading Someone Else's Tests
Preventing Academic Dishonesty
Evaluating Your Own Teaching Performance
Bibliography of Teaching Resources
Multicultural Issues
The American Educational System (for International TAs)

This section more than any other reflects the attitudes and philosophies about teaching that are held by the people who choose or write the articles to be included. It is important to remember that there is no one right way to teach, but many effective styles and strategies. TAs are in the process of developing their styles and philosophies and need encouragement and support for their efforts. To imply through this section that there is one right strategy in every teaching situation may be to add to their already high anxiety levels. Reinforcement and encouragement for TAs to *think* about what they want to accomplish in their teaching activities should be the approach for this section.

Campus resources. This section most often includes items that can be categorized as "where to go for help." Typical of topics in this section are lists of support units where both TAs and undergraduate students may seek assistance either with their studies or personal concerns. Examples include: instructional media, printing, computing services, library hours, counseling, writing, and math center services. Where instructional development or faculty development centers exist, they were also listed.

Recommendations. TA handbooks emphasize the teaching role. It is recommended that to balance the focus, material describing various viewpoints on how students learn be included. It is also recommended that the handbook *not* be used as a means of neglecting or ignoring our responsibilities for TA development.

Conclusions

TA handbooks are important tools with potential to make the role of the TA clearer and the job easier to perform successfully. When used as a supplement to TA development programs, our handbook acquaints TAs with a collection of readings, logistical information, and definitions of responsibilities not readily available elsewhere. While there are infinite ways of designing handbooks, the sections you include are entirely your choice. Your choices will depend on the nature of your setting, your TAs, and your overall purpose: the improvement of undergraduate instruction.

References

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Judy G. Bailey is Instructional Development Consultant at the Center for Teaching Effectiveness, University of Delaware.

Producing a TA Newsletter

Laura Border

As examples of newsletters come across your desk you may wonder if a TA newsletter could help your program. You may ask yourself: Does the program need a newsletter? Who would fund it? Who would write it? How much additional work would the staff have? This article is directed at people who are involved at some level in the training of teaching assistants and examines how to determine if a newsletter would benefit your TAs and your program, how to obtain sufficient funding, and what you need to learn about production so you can accomplish your task.

If you sit down and talk to a group of beginning TAs you will probably find that they need and want training; they want to feel a sense of connection with faculty and undergraduate students; they desperately need information about campus resources–they may not even know that your staff exists; they crave a taste of the professionalism associated with working at a university; and they would be thrilled to have their teaching efforts recognized and rewarded.

However, as you may remember from your own experience in graduate school as a TA, on many campuses graduate teaching assistants occupy the proverbial black hole–their needs may go unnoticed or be met superficially. TA training programs tend to be limited and rarely touch all the TAs involved in teaching. On the typical campus TAs tend to be familiar only with their home departments and consequently base their examples of good teaching on a limited range of teaching styles. Although they want to connect, they may on the contrary experience a sense of isolation from faculty and from the campus community at large. Many TAs lack information about campus resources and support staff, even though they could deal more effectively with daily student crises if they were knowledgeable about all the resources available to their students: study skills centers, tutoring services, counseling centers, and career services.

While TAs are technically classified as faculty, they may feel like strangers in a strange land and wonder how to make the leap from the nowhere land of graduate school to the hallowed halls occupied by the tenured professors. TAs often lack access to professional development and may not be aware of professional organizations in their field. In spite of the fact that they spend long hours with countless students and work hard at their teaching, they may be, or at least feel, completely unrecognized for their efforts.

How can a TA newsletter change this typical situation? First of all, a newsletter can function as a helping hand that reaches out to connect people across campus. A newsletter allows you to feature various aspects of your TA training program, while communicating information to all TAs on campus–not just the ones who come to training sessions. Outstanding professors from all areas of the campus can be featured so that their expertise is shared outside of their departments. Well-chosen articles can make TAs aware of their professional status, encouraging them to become involved in professional development and professional organizations, while articles about the successes of TAs can provide them with the public recognition they merit. Articles about test construction, evaluation, and other issues of import can encourage TAs to learn more about teaching and take advantage of the services your TA training program provides. Advertising student support service activities through a TA newsletter can lead to an increase in attendance at study skills groups, an increase in the use of counseling services, tutorial services, career services, and other available student support. As TAs become familiar with campus resources, they begin to refer undergraduates directly to the appropriate offices. As can be seen from the examples above, justifying the need for a TA newsletter is not difficult–a newsletter can fill many gaps in the typical campus communication network and provide a forum for discussion among faculty and graduate teachers.

Funding

Even from the ivory towers of academe, practical matters intervene. Where can the typical TA training program obtain sufficient funding for a TA newsletter? Units that might be supportive of such efforts include the graduate school, academic affairs, or academic support services. Parent or alumni groups may also be interested enough in upgrading undergraduate education to provide seed money to begin worthwhile projects. If possible, it is a good idea to procure a permanent allocation of funds to ensure long-term support for the newsletter. The recent publication of the Carnegie Report and the Holmes Report, both of which stress the importance of upgrading the United States colleges and universities, may help lend credence to your search for monies. Naturally, costs will vary. Check with your publications office to obtain an initial ballpark figure, so that you do not have too many surprises as you proceed and so that you can plan and can stay within your budget.

Production

Once your office has established a need for a TA newsletter and obtained sufficient funding, you will need to look at what is involved in production. The preliminary steps involve conceptualizing, naming, designing, writing, and producing the actual newsletter.

The Concept and the Name

Developing the concept and the name of the newsletter is the fun and creative part of the process. It involves brainstorming as well as work with a designer or an artist. Consider what is unique about your program. What exactly are you trying to communicate to TAs? How can this concept be reproduced graphically? What name captures this concept? Think about the image you would like to project. To use a Freudian analogy, do you want to appeal to the scholarly superego by choosing a name such as *The Academic Leader*? Would you prefer reflecting the practical and straightforward ego with a name such as *The TA Newsletter*? Or would you rather evoke the humor associated with the id with a name such as *The Tutor*, allowing for both verbal and visual puns?

In creating *The Tutor*, we wanted to communicate a serious approach to pedagogy while using a playful visual design. Tutor, of course, means teacher, while communicating the idea of a supportive service. The verbal and visual pun on tutor/tooter juxtaposed with a little man blowing a horn catch the eye and elicit a chuckle upon first glance. The pun led to the creation of a cartoon character named Tooter who is used in "Tooter's Teaching Tips," as well as on posters and flyers to help identify activities of the Graduate Teacher Program. Try to select a name that will catch your readers' eyes and stir their imagination, so that they will be encouraged to pick up your newsletter and take the time to look at it.

The Design Phase

With the concept and name in mind, you are ready to move to the design phase. Your staff will need to decide–perhaps in consultation with an editor or artist–on the type style, layout, use of spot artwork and photo reproduction, and color scheme for the paper and ink. Regular letter size is usually most practical.

For your print style you can choose from an assortment of typefaces. Those with serifs, or curlicues, are easier to read than sans serif faces–the straight, unadorned, gothic styles. The choice of type should enhance the original concept, be it scholarly, straightforward, or humorous. Depending on the resources available and the time frame involved, the type can be set with a typewriter, a computer, or with a typesetting machine using a photographic development process. The quality of your finished product will, of course, reflect the kind of type you choose and how carefully you use it.

After selecting an appropriate typeface, you can explore the wonderful world of paper. Paper comes in all shades of the rainbow and in all textures from smooth and glossy to pebbled and dull. One thing to consider is that research has shown that people do not like to read paper that is bright yellow or goldenrod or too shiny or too dark.

The Layout

With the name, typeface, and paper chosen, work on the layout can begin. How the newsletter is laid out is very important. First, decide whether you want a four- or six-page spread. Next design the columns. A page with two broad columns is much easier to do but less readable than a three-column page. Then decide on a masthead or logo. Be sure to include necessary information such as the volume, number, date, university logo, and name of your program, as well as the name of the newsletter. The layout should be kept open by including enough visuals to break up the density of the print. It should be balanced and look appealing. Given TAs' busy schedules a layout that does not look too bookish is more likely to be perused. To break up the space and open up the layout, it is helpful to use–in addition to headlines and subheads–spot artwork, cartoons, or illustrations. Depending on the kind of final printing process you choose, black-and-white photos can be reproduced in varying sizes and colors with different degrees of success. The layout will be most effective if the page of type is broken up by at least two visuals. Remember a good graphic is worth a thousand words!

The Color Scheme

Decide whether the newsletter will appear monthly, quarterly, triannually, or biannually. Then during the design phase, plan the color scheme for a long term. For example, the color scheme could reflect the school colors, the seasons of the year, or simply department identity. Different colors of ink can be used at little additional cost, although black ink is always elegant and legible. We decided to print *The Tutor* four times a year, which allowed us to have yearly variations on shades of purple for spring, green for summer, brown for fall, and blue for winter.

The Writing Stage

After the concept is developed, an appropriate name chosen, the design, layout, artwork, and choice of paper and ink made, the articles must be prepared. Who will write the articles for your newsletter? This will depend on the resources available to your TA training office. You may need to write the articles yourself; for example, you could interview graduate students or TA supervisors or discuss various aspects of your TA training program. Faculty or graduate students may be willing to write articles for publication. At UCB, we have videotaped and audiotaped various sessions at our TA workshops and have written articles based on those workshops. We find that professors are glad to have their ideas in print–and appreciate not having to do the actual writing. It is also possible (with permission) to reprint articles from other newsletters or journals. You may want to include lists of campus resources and descriptions of various services. Articles should be timely, useful, short, and memorable.

Stages of Production

Decide on a schedule early in the planning stage. How the newsletter is produced will be based on the funds, human resources, and publication services available to you. If you choose to work with your university's publications department, certain predictable steps will be followed. A typed version of the manuscript, with black-and-white glossy photos and art specifications will be delivered to the editor, who will edit the copy, make sure that it meets university standards, and return it to you for either rewriting or approval. The publications office will probably take care of all further steps: typesetting, paste-up, photo reproduction, printing, and delivery.

The recent advances in computer desktop publishing are gratifying and convenient. If you have the proper equipment available–IBM or Macintosh–you can do your own typesetting and electronic layout in-house. If you check with printers beforehand and plan the size and shape of the newsletter to meet their specifications, the newsletter can be run by a quick printer at a reasonable cost.

Delivery

It may be possible to have the printed newsletter delivered directly to the university mailing services where it can be mailed according to prepared mailing lists. However, here is a helpful hint: Because it is difficult to update lists of TAs' names, at UCB we call the departmental secretaries each semester and request the number of graduate teachers employed in their departments–then we bundle up the correct amount of newsletters per department and send the package off to the graduate secretary for distribution.

In summary, we would like to suggest that a TA newsletter can serve several functions on your campus. A TA newsletter aids in the dissemination of information on college teaching, it permits the sharing of faculty expertise across disciplines and literally across campus, it gives TAs a sense of community and of interdepartmental connection, and not least–the production of a TA newsletter can help in the growth and import of your TA training program.

Laura Border coordinates the Graduate Teacher Program housed in the University Learning Center at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

The Training of Graduate Teaching Assistants at the University of Washington

Jody D. Nyquist and Donald H. Wulff

As in many other institutions, the training of graduate teaching assistants (TAs) at the University of Washington began with meetings between TAs and course supervisors within departments that offered courses with large enrollments. These meetings were usually informal get-togethers to talk about the course including what the course supervisor expected of the graduate teaching assistants, how student work was to be evaluated, and what would be on the final exam. A few departments offered TA orientation and weekly meetings as early as the 1950s. Over the years, large enrollment courses in many disciplines increased and multisectioned introductory courses grew, requiring TAs to assume instructor roles. By 1980, TAs were responsible for a portion of the instruction in 33% of the 100-200 level courses and for almost 25% of the instruction in all undergraduate courses at the University of Washington. As Provost Beckmann wrote in May of 1980, "Although graduate teaching assistants have consistently proven themselves to be hard-working, responsible instructors, it appears that many teaching assistants are expected to grade papers, conduct quiz sections, and teach undergraduate courses without adequate training or supervision" (Beckmann, May 1980). The provost appointed a TA training task force whose mandate was to "examine the way departments presently train and supervise teaching assistants and do whatever is necessary to ensure that all teaching assistants receive appropriate orientation, training, and supervision by Autumn, 1981" (Beckmann, April 1980). The plan devised by that task force shaped the overall design of TA training at the University of Washington. This paper will attempt to describe the design of that training and its current implementation in the hope that the ideas will be of value to other institutions.

Overview of the Institution's Approach to TA Training

As originally conceived, TA training at the University of Washington remains the responsibility of each department that employs graduate students to teach in undergraduate courses whether the TA corrects and holds conferences over student work, leads a quiz section, conducts a laboratory, tutors, lectures in a large class, or assumes total responsibility for a class including the assignment of course grades. TAs now represent 43.9% of the total faculty (a significant amount yet actually less than the averages of peer institutions[1], which accounted for 53.5% in 1983), and are responsible for 28% of the instruction in all undergraduate classes. In the School of Business about 30% of credits earned for an undergraduate degree are earned in courses taught by TAs; in history, however, graduate assistants are responsible for less than 1% of the total credits earned. Nevertheless, about 1,200 TAs (as of autumn quarter, 1986) are responsible for a significant portion of the instructional programs in departments that teach undergraduate courses.

As a result of this significant dependence on TAs for teaching undergraduate classes, the university actively attempts to enable each academic unit with graduate teaching assistant appointments to provide ongoing TA training programs. In doing so, the university adheres to a discipline-specific approach, believing that the way academics stimulate inquiry, generate knowledge, and present understanding is specific to the respective disciplines. Operationally, this results in department-centered TA training programs. Each department is asked to show evidence of a training program that will assist its graduate teaching assistants in acquiring the skills necessary to perform the assigned instructional tasks. Every two years, the provost requests a written report from each department describing its efforts in this area. Since the university believes in this discipline-specific approach and, consequently, does not require all TAs to complete a general cross-discipline training program as do some universities, the administration provides resources for departmental TA training programs through the Center for Instructional Development and Research (CIDR).

The Center for Instructional Development and Research

The primary purpose of CIDR is to encourage and support improvement of teaching and learning at the University of Washington. Representing a part of the university's commitment to excellence in teaching, CIDR operates as an active instructional resource clearinghouse to provide comprehensive assistance to all instructors at the institution. (For a more complete description of the center's philosophy and operations, see Nyquist, 1986.) Thus, a significant part of CIDR's mission lies in providing assistance to TAs through their departmental programs.

Train-the-Trainer Model

The TA training support that CIDR staff provides for departments is based on a train-the-trainer model originally described in the organizational development literature. An important assumption of this model is that leaders/supervisors should play an active role in training–that training is most effectively conducted by those who best understand the particular task to be accomplished and that training the trainer, who returns to a department division or unit in an organization to instruct others, is cost effective.

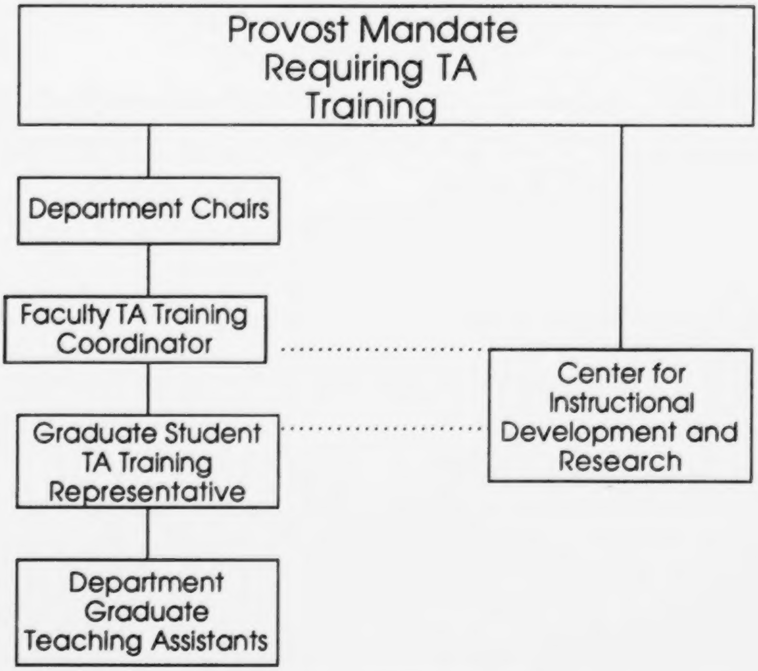
Using this approach, CIDR staff are involved in providing ideas, materials, and instructional facilities for a faculty TA training coordinator and a student TA training representative appointed by the chairs of each department employing teaching assistants. These two departmentally appointed trainers form the network for an exchange of ideas between CIDR staff and trainers and among trainers from the various departments employing TAs.

Thus, TA training at the University of Washington can be represented by Figure 1 (see next page). Using this model, CIDR staff provide a large number of services designed to meet the specific needs of TA trainers in each department. The yearly cycle typically begins when CIDR offers a spring TA training planning meeting in May of each year.

Spring TA Training Planning Meeting

The purpose of the spring TA training planning meeting for faculty TA training coordinators and graduate student representatives is to demonstrate the use of the instructional lab and other tools, and to facilitate small group discussions over

Figure 1. University of Washington "Train-the-Trainer" Model for Graduate Teaching Assistant Training


Provost Mandate Requiring TA Training
Department Chairs
Faculty TA Training Coordinator
Graduate Student TA Training Representative
Department Graduate Teaching Assistants
Center for Instructional Development and Research

training concerns of department members. The opening session of the spring meeting typically includes remarks from the dean of the Graduate School, and previews of newly developed materials. This session is followed by workshops including such topics as: (a) developing a quarter-length TA seminar (proseminar); (b) organizing a three-day or week-long orientation; (c) using technology for improvement of instruction; and (d) evaluating TA instruction. CIDR staff consultants are also available to consult with departmental representatives who have more specific interests or needs.

Faculty coordinators and TA representatives leave the spring meeting with packets of training materials, including request forms for CIDR resources and TA instructional interest inventories for use in determining the needs and interests of TAs in their own departments. Included also is a possible timeline for the development of a TA orientation training program as shown below.

Timeline for Planning TA Orientation Activities

The following outline is designed to assist departments in developing a timetable for planning TA orientation activities. For individuals wishing to discuss their plans for orientation in more detail, CIDR staff are available to assist in assessment of departmental needs and design of a program to meet those needs.

May

1. Notify new graduate students of the: (a) need for reliable summer addresses, (b) arrival of important mailings, and (c) requirements for TA orientation. (Often this process can be conducted in conjunction with other departmental mailings notifying new graduate students of their acceptance into graduate study.)
2. Assess departmental TA training needs and resources. (This process often includes using evaluations, mailings, and printed materials from previous orientations, talking to TAs and faculty about perceived needs, and reviewing programs developed by other departments.)
3. Attend CIDR spring TA training planning meeting. (This meeting provides planners the opportunity to review available resources outside their departments, to assess their program in terms of campus-wide training efforts, and to begin scheduling services for fall training.)
4. Develop an overall plan for TA training. (Increasingly, individual departments are finding that their training needs are best met by ongoing programs of TA training that proceed throughout the academic year. If ongoing training is a departmental need, it is important to plan the program early in order to make the best use of resources. Many departments have found that a professional seminar on teaching is an important part of their ongoing training. For those interested in developing such programs, CIDR staff are available to assist with planning and development.)

June

1. Decide on tentative schedule of activities for fall orientation. (It is helpful to develop a tentative schedule before faculty and graduate students leave for the summer. The development of such a schedule commonly includes review of all resources–both within and outside the department–that can assist in meeting departmental TA orientation needs.)
2. Obtain permission from participants. (It is common to include both faculty and returning TAs in the orientation activities. It is best, however, if they are notified before they embark on other summer activities. When they agree to participate, it is important to inquire if they have any special room or equipment needs for their presentations. For greatest flexibility, it is also important to schedule CIDR staff as early as possible, especially if they will be providing training assistance during the summer.)
3. Check availability of rooms, equipment, and resources. (Equipment and resources are heavily scheduled at orientation time. For the best service, planners should schedule all resources well in advance, particularly those resources that are used across campus during orientation week, i.e., CIDR and Instructional Media Services.)
4. Obtain feedback about tentative schedule. (Because of the variety of schedules and needs of those involved in TA training, it is important to obtain feedback about the schedule of activities. Commonly, departmental TA coordinators

prepare tentative schedules and distribute them to faculty and continuing graduate teaching assistants for feedback.)

5. Finalize the schedule. (Having the schedule finalized before participants leave for the summer ensures that all participants are aware of their responsibilities. Finalizing the schedule early also means confirmation of resources outside the department.)

July-August

1. Notify new graduate students of their responsibilities during TA training. (This mailing should include a schedule of orientation activities. Commonly, TAs are reminded that their pay begins on September 16 and they can, therefore, be required to attend departmental orientation activities any time after that date. Some departments remind newcomers that they should arrive in plenty of time to find housing, establish bank accounts, etc., so they are free to focus on orientation during the scheduled times. Many departments also send out copies of reading materials such as textbooks and *Mentor*, the TA handbook.)

2. Work with CIDR staff for any training assistance needed to facilitate workshops or videotapes for fall presentation. (CIDR staff encourage departments to use individuals in their own disciplines as resource persons for presentations during orientation. Since the activities frequently involve facilitation of videotapes produced at the center or discussion of instructional issues, CIDR staff work with individuals to prepare for their responsibilities as resource persons in their own departments. It is best if CIDR staff can provide such assistance well in advance of the formal orientation.)

3. Confirm scheduled resources and facilities. (In late July or early August, CIDR staff will send a letter of confirmation to all departments that have scheduled CIDR services. It is a good idea to confirm all other resources and facilities as well.)

4. Gather materials for packets. (Many departments prepare a packet of materials designed to orient new graduate students to the department and the university in general. Packets commonly include materials such as: departmental policies and guidelines; information on graduate teaching assignments; instructional resources; CIDR brochure; building, campus and university district maps; faculty profiles; *Mentor*; counseling center information; style and policy manual for theses and dissertations; GPSS manual; and descriptions of other graduate student organizations and services. To avoid overload, many departments send out some of the reading during the summer.)

September

1. Send reminder notes to participants. (Before the formal activities, presenters should be reminded of times, places, and logistics for their participation.)

2. Conduct orientation activities. (Most departments conduct orientation during the week prior to the beginning of classes. Although the length of orientation varies, the average length is three to five days.)

3. Obtain closure. (Such closure consists of activities such as returning equipment and sending thank you notes to presenters.)

4. Follow-up. (Follow-up may consist of a variety of training activities including: a one-quarter, discipline-specific seminar on instruction; ongoing discipline-specific workshops on instructional issues; periodic videotaping of

instruction; midterm evaluations for each quarter; classroom observations conducted by faculty supervisors or CIDR staff consultants.)

This timetable is approximate and is designed to be used as a guide. The planning activities may actually overlap from month to month depending on the needs of individual departments.

Through follow-up letters sent to all departmental representatives following the spring meeting, CIDR staff maintain contact with all faculty coordinators and TA representatives who attended. In many cases those contacts result in ongoing training and consultation during the summer to assist departments in designing and planning for fall TA orientations.

Fall TA Orientations

Following the design and planning stages for TA orientations, many faculty coordinators or TA representatives request CIDR staff to provide customized workshops for their TAs during their orientation programs. These are workshops that have been developed in collaboration with the TA trainers and are adapted to the needs of the TAs in a specific discipline.

Typical workshops requested for TA orientations are on the topics of lecturing, leading class discussion, constructing and evaluating tests, teaching effectively, problem solving, adapting to learning styles, using small group instruction, assigning and responding to student writing, and using computers in instruction. CIDR staff will also show teaching videotapes and will facilitate discussion following the viewing in order to relate issues raised in the videotape to the needs and interests of the department.

Instructional Materials

In addition to providing services through direct interaction with departments, CIDR also produces materials for departmental TA training programs. All publications are responses to departmental requests for assistance on a particular issue. Examples of materials recently published at CIDR include:

- *Mentor: A Handbook for New Teaching Assistants*
- *Manage Your Student Ratings (TA edition)* and *Now Make the Most of Your Student Ratings*
- *Reference Manual for Teaching Assistants in Life Science Laboratories*
- *Using Video to Enhance Instruction*
- *The Role of the Graduate Teaching Assistant* (a videotape about TA responsibilities)
- *Encounters with Teaching* (a videotape about managing TA-student encounters)

The center also maintains bibliographies for TAs who are interested in reading more about teaching effectiveness of TAs. (See example, Appendix A.)

CIDR Videotape Facilities and Services

An important part of the center's contribution to TA training programs are our videotaping services. CIDR maintains a teaching lab that can be used by TAs for instructional development. The teaching lab consists of a classroom with two wall-mounted color cameras and a monitor. Behind the classroom, in a separate room, is the remote facility with a video switching board and remote controls. The camera operator sits here and electronically moves the two cameras and adjusts the sound for an optimum recording. A special effects generator located on the switching board allows for the simultaneous recording of instructor presentation on one half-screen and student responses on the other half. This facility makes it possible for center staff to help TAs analyze their instruction and increase their effectiveness in a variety of ways:

Videotape of instructor and class with consultation. This service consists of videotaping a TA in either the CIDR teaching lab or the regular classroom followed by a consultation with a trained CIDR staff member. The consultation includes identification of an instructor's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as strategies for change.

Video coaching (simultaneous feedback). This service consists of the use of a small transistorized earplug that makes possible coaching by a trained CIDR staff member as the TA is actually teaching. This process is very useful for learning how to conduct discussions in quiz sections, labs, or one-to-one tutorials. Because of the special wiring necessary for this method of instructional development, the CIDR teaching lab is the only location where simultaneous feedback is offered.

Microteaching. This service consists of a teach-reteach process using videotape to record an initial miniteaching lesson, followed by a critique of the initial attempt and reteaching of the minilesson incorporating the suggested improvements. Microteaching can be done in either a one-to-one setting or a group workshop setting. TA representatives and coordinators can be trained to facilitate the process, or CIDR will provide trained staff. Although microteaching can be done in individual departments, many instructors elect to hold microteaching sessions in the teaching lab because of the recording versatility and ease with which tapes can be made.

TA Training Follow-up

All services provided to TA trainers are followed up using a systematic call-back system. CIDR staff have client lists including TA Trainers whom they contact on a regular basis. This follow-up is focused on enabling departments to provide ongoing TA training programs throughout the academic year. Center staff currently are making a concerted effort to encourage departments to offer proseminars, which are quarter-length professional seminars focused on the teaching of a specific discipline at the college/university level. Graduate student credit may be provided for such courses.

Consultation Services

In addition to working with faculty TA coordinators and TA representatives, CIDR staff also interact with individual TAs. In fact, CIDR staff spend a great deal of time in consultation with TAs. When TAs call the center for assistance, they are commonly referred to a consultant who specializes in the particular area of interest. For example, a TA may be concerned about his or her approach to lecturing or discussion or may want help with interpreting a set of student ratings. Another TA may be interested in ways of obtaining student feedback or working to improve teaching effectiveness. In these instances, the center staff uses consultation to help the TA identify particular instructional needs in the context of the specific discipline and choose an appropriate form of assistance. Instructional assistance is available to TAs in a variety of areas, including many offered in a workshop setting: course planning and development; teaching strategies; large class instruction; instructional uses of new technologies; classroom presentation skills; student-teacher interactions; student learning styles; student writing; methods of evaluating teaching; test construction and evaluation; instructional resources and materials; and instructional research.

In some of these cases, the TA may simply need to be referred to other print or media resources. In other cases, the TA may choose further interaction with the consultant in the form of videotape critique or assistance in designing or evaluating writing assignments. CIDR consultations over more effective ways of using writing as a teaching tool in a course, for example, might focus on designing effective writing assignments in keeping with objectives in a specific course or working with revisions and multiple drafts.

Frequently, consultation with individual TAs arises from requests for assistance in obtaining midterm feedback from students. Small group instructional diagnosis (SGID) is a method of course evaluation designed to help instructors obtain such feedback. The method, commonly conducted at midterm, uses class interviews with students to provide suggestions to strengthen the course, increase communication between the students and the teacher, and improve instruction. The process not only assists the TA in identifying problem areas, but also generates alternatives for change that the TA might adopt.

Individual consultation services provided to TAs who want assistance with designing/evaluating writing or conducting midterm evaluations are confidential and free for University of Washington TAs. Such consulting appointments are welcomed on a one-time only or a continuing basis.

International Teaching Assistant Project

Because international teaching assistants (ITAs) at the University of Washington play an important role in undergraduate education and have specific needs, center staff designed a special project addressing the needs of ITAs. This project is committed to meeting the instructional needs of both the individual ITAs and the departments in which they teach. The ITA project consists of four interdependent parts. Before autumn quarter, new ITAs participate in a week-long workshop. During the academic year, participants attend weekly, quarter-long seminars and weekly tutorials where individual consultation allows for focus on linguistic, presentation, and interpersonal aspects of teaching. Finally, those ITAs who interact directly with undergraduate students are involved in consulting and feedback consultations with center staff.

CIDR Research

Throughout their efforts to assist departments and individual TAs, CIDR staff maintain an active role in instructional research. Using a variety of educational research methods, CIDR staff work side by side with course supervisors and/or TAs to solve instructional problems occurring within a course or across courses in a department. An example of such research would be the application of the SGID process across all sections of a multisection course to gather data for the improvement of a specific course taught by a variety of TAs.

Sometimes CIDR staff are asked to conduct a study of the effectiveness of a particular course format in terms of its lecture/lab components. Or the request may be for the evaluation of course materials, activities, assignments, and/or tests.

Using a variety of assessment tools, including instructor and student interviews, classroom observations, surveys, analysis of class documents, etc., CIDR staff provide a descriptive account of the class from the perspective of all participants and the CIDR staff member as an outside observer.

In addition, CIDR staff conduct ongoing research projects to respond to theoretical or practical needs for research on topics related to instructional issues at the University of Washington. Selected projects currently underway include:

TA instructional interests assessment. The TA instructional interests assessment project surveyed the needs and interests of TAs across the campus. The center collected data on TA perceptions concerning: (a) the instructional skills required for TAs to teach effectively in specific disciplines, (b) available resources, (c) the level of faculty supervision, and (d) their instructional interests. In addition, the survey includes an assessment of concerns or difficulties that TAs encounter at the University of Washington. The survey also provides demographic information for TA training planning including TA preparation for teaching prior to UW appointment, previous teaching experience, and variety of courses taught by TAs.

Large class study. The large class study explores student and faculty perceptions of large classes at the University of Washington. Using questionnaires administered to students in large classes and qualitative methods of interview and observation, the CIDR researchers compiled data from students enrolled in large classes, faculty who teach large classes, and TAs who assist in large classes. Results of the study will increase understanding of students, faculty and teaching assistants engaged in teaching and learning in large classes at the University of Washington. Since large classes commonly involve TAs who assist with quiz sections, evaluation, curriculum design, and management, the insights provided in this study will be useful for all TAs who anticipate assignments related to large classes at the university.

CIDR exit survey study. The general goal of the exit survey study was to provide assistance to departments interested in collecting systematic evaluative and diagnostic feedback about the instructional experiences of their graduating students. This study assumes that exit or graduate survey data serve as a component of departmental program and instructional development. Departments that use graduate TAs to provide instruction to undergraduate students can use exit surveys to gather feedback about the training and instructional experiences of TAs. This data can then be used to inform the development of departmental TA training programs.

Evaluation of teaching effectiveness. CIDR has been conducting an in-depth investigation of two evaluation procedures used for assessing teaching effectiveness on campus. This study is based on an earlier pilot study (Wulff, Staton-Spicer, Hess & Nyquist, 1985) that concluded that students prefer some form of midterm rather than end-of-the-quarter evaluation of teaching effectiveness. The present study explores student satisfaction with methods of evaluating teaching effectiveness based on whether evaluation is: (a) conducted at midterm or end-of-the-quarter, (b) based on data collected through standardized forms or qualitative statements generated from student discussions in small groups, (c) combined with specific feedback to the class from the instructor.

International teaching assistant survey. CIDR is currently analyzing data from two surveys conducted with ITAs at the University of Washington. The goals of the survey are to provide: (a) a demographic profile of the ITA population, and (b) an analysis of ITA instructional concerns. These data also identify how

ITAs attempt to explore campus resources–both individuals and instructional materials–to resolve their concerns and cope with instructional differences.

Summary

In our efforts to provide assistance for TA training programs, we at CIDR provide services and address concerns at a variety of levels. In the organization and planning of departmental TA training programs, we work with departmental chairpersons, faculty TA training coordinators, and student TA training representatives. Additionally, we work with TAs who individually come to the center for assistance or are referred by their home departments. In some cases we address a particular set of TA instructional needs as represented in the ITA project. Whatever the need, we work to provide services, publish materials, conduct research, and consult with TAs in order to enable them to be effective instructors while they are at the University of Washington and to prepare those for whom college instruction will be a career.

Our approach allows us to provide extensive TA training on our campus. It enables us to encourage departments to be responsible for their own TA training based on a strong discipline orientation, and it allows TAs to work with potential mentors within their own departments. Additionally, it increases the small CIDR staff by 160; two members from each of the 80 departments employing TAs are involved in planning and executing TA training programs. It is clearly a cost effective effort.

The approach has its limitations, of course, since it depends on the level of the department's commitment to the training of their TAs. A few of our departments provide TA training programs that consist of one half-day of TA/faculty discussions about particular courses. That, we believe, is not sufficient training. Many other departments, however, provide TA training programs lasting from three days to two weeks in the autumn, followed by classroom visits from the course supervisors, weekly meetings, and ongoing workshops throughout the academic year. Some departments offer extensive orientation in the autumn, weekly TA training meetings, quarterly classroom observation by course supervisors and/or CIDR staff, required class interviews and/or videotape critiques, and well-developed professional seminars focused on the teaching of a particular discipline in the college/university setting.

Graduate teaching assistant training continues to be a challenge for those of us in the Center for Instructional Development and Research. Effective TA training is a key element in our effort to try to assist departments in improving undergraduate education at the University of Washington.

Note

[1] "Peer Institutions," as adopted by the Washington State Legislature, include University of Arizona, University of California-Berkeley, University of California-Los Angeles, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, University of Illinois-Champaign, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of Oregon (includes Health Sciences in Portland).

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Appendix A

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Jody D. Nyquist is Director for Instructional Development and Donald H. Wulff is an Instructional Development Specialist at the Center for Instructional Development and Research, University of Washington.

An Alternative to a Big-Deal TA Training Program: Cooperative Departmental Efforts on Shoestring Budgets

Linc. Fisch

At some universities it is possible to mount an extended campus-wide training program for graduate teaching assistants; at others the department is the focus of the TA training effort. At Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), a regional institution of 12,000 students, we could do neither.

Eastern Kentucky University did not have the resources for a campus-wide program. Only a 90-minute orientation, devoted primarily to administrative matters, was provided for all TAs. EKU has a modest graduate enrollment, all at the master's level. No individual department had financial or personnel resources to conduct a program for its small number of TAs.

Several EKU faculty members were concerned about the need for some sort of effort to help better prepare our TAs for their teaching responsibilities. Out of this grew an idea to organize a cooperative effort among four departments: biological sciences, English, psychology, and mathematics/statistics/computer science. Planning sessions by representatives of the departments led to a proposal (see Appendix A) that was endorsed by the three deans involved and accepted by the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Research. A pilot run was conducted in the autumn semester of 1985.

Initially, the program was conceived as a day-long workshop followed by a series of weekly seminars throughout the semester. Two factors caused a major modification in this plan: (a) our perception of the need to confront as many topics as possible, as soon as possible; and (b) the high availability of TAs before class began, coupled with the difficulty of finding times thereafter when everyone could meet.

The design that evolved consisted of three afternoon workshops prior to the start of classes and three follow-up sessions. The workshop topics included time management, the first day of class, motivating students, lectures and discussions, university procedures and resources, testing/grading/evaluation, and academic ethics. The sessions displayed a variety of teaching models: lecture, discussion, debate, and role playing. Departmental coordinators and other faculty members served as presenters and resource persons.

One-hour follow-up sessions were scheduled in late September and late October, with topics selected according to TAs' interests. Relevant reprints and other handouts were distributed to TAs periodically during the semester. A final wrap-up session was held in early December. Participating departments were encouraged to schedule interim seminars for their own students; two did, with positive results.

Costs for the seminar series were less than $23 per teaching assistant. (This included a luncheon and a resource book, Bill McKeachie's *Teaching Tips.*) Funds were provided by the Offices of Graduate Studies and Academic Affairs.

Evaluation of the seminar series by both TAs and departmental coordinators supported continuing the seminar series in the future, perhaps extending it to include other departments who, hearing of the program, asked to participate. Only relatively minor changes in format seemed to be indicated. The following are our principal recommendations for other universities who want to consider a program of this nature:

- Planning and conducting the program should be a cooperative endeavor of the participating departments in order to promote "ownership" for the program. However, leadership by one person serving as overall coordinator and administrator is also desirable in order to prevent "things from slipping between the cracks."
- The program should have the visible support of the chairs and members of the several departments involved.
- It may be better to cluster departments according to the nature of TAs' teaching responsibilities (lab instruction, discussion sections, etc.). On the other hand, a strong point can be made for the cross-fertilization of ideas from several instructional patterns.
- Participating departments should be urged to hold discipline-specific sessions throughout the semester in complement to the general sessions.
- Participation of TAs should be a contractual expectation, and this should be made clear at the time of appointment. Time for the program should be designated in advance in TAs' schedules. If possible, academic credit should be given for participation.
- Elements that could be incorporated to advantage into the program include: (a) microteaching experience, (b) TAs observing each others' performance and consulting with each other, and (c) having each TA work on a small improvement project during the semester.

It was our conclusion that organizing departments into clusters in order to accomplish TA training is a viable and cost-effective model. An informal canvas within a national professional organization whose members are active in faculty and organizational development has not turned up any other instances of use of the model.

Appendix A

A Pilot Program for Training Teaching Assistants in Four EKU Departments

A number of EKU departments employ graduate students as teaching assistants. In some instances, TAs carry out only a portion of the instructional responsibilities for a course, perhaps conducting laboratory or discussion sections. In other instances, TAs have full responsibility for courses, sometimes with supervision and sometimes without supervision. In many cases, relatively little attention is given to preparing TAs for their instructional duties. There seems to be general agreement that more effort in this area is needed.

Some universities have developed systematic programs for orienting and training TAs on either the department or university level. Because of the diversity of patterns of TA responsibility at EKU, an all-university program does not seem appropriate at the present time. Because the number of TAs in any given department is relatively low and because some departments may not be able to identify or free faculty members who can develop a full-scale TA training program, training at the department level often may not be feasible.

A strategy that meets these problems is a program among several cooperating departments, conducted by a team of representatives from those departments and other resource persons in the university. In addition to meeting a need efficiently, such a program has the advantage of bringing together students and faculty from several departments, which enhances the sharing of ideas.

A pilot program for training TAs will be initiated in August 1985 cooperatively by the departments of Biological Sciences, English, Mathematics/Statistics/Computer Science and Psychology. The program will run for the fall term. It will be evaluated carefully in order to determine whether such a program should continue and, if so, in what form. About 30 TAs are expected to participate.

The format and topics for this pilot program have been developed by representatives of the departments. The program will begin with a luncheon on August 22. Three general sessions (each about two hours long) will be held prior to the start of fall classes. Topics include organizing and managing time, the first day of class, motivating students, lecturing and its variations, testing/grading/evaluation, and academic ethics.

Two follow-up sessions devoted to topics identified by TAs will be held in mid-September and late October. During the semester individual departments may conduct additional sessions on topics specific to their disciplines. A final session in December will be devoted to reports of individual projects undertaken by TAs and to program evaluation.

Coordinators for the pilot program are Sanford Jones, Charles Whitaker, Linc Fisch and Robert Adams. Additional resource persons identified (to date) to participate in the initial sessions are John MacDonald, Jay Riggs, and Ronald Schmelzer.

The cost for the pilot program is nominal. The projected total budget to cover the luncheon and instructional materials is $666, or less than $23 per TA. A resource book (McKeachie's *Teaching Tips*) and additional duplicated papers will be provided. The program will be underwritten by funds from the Offices of the Graduate School and Academic Affairs and Research.

In addition to providing an important service, this program will test a model that might be adapted to other clusters of departments in the university. It is a model that might be exported to other universities whose TA situation is similar to that at EKU. Additionally, it might have spin-off benefits through effects on regular faculty members through increased working together among university departments.

Linc. Fisch teaches mathematics at Lexington Community College in Kentucky.

Support Services for Graduate Teaching Assistants at the University of Georgia

William K. Jackson

Introduction

The University of Georgia (UGA) is a land grant research university and the flagship institution for the 33-unit University System of Georgia. The university enrolls approximately 25,000 students–18,000 undergraduates and 7,000 graduate students–and employs 350 graduate teaching assistants (TAs). Graduate students employed as TAs are approved by the Board of Regents of the University System to serve as primary instructors in lower division courses, and many of them have full responsibility for introductory courses in areas such as freshman English, mathematics, and foreign languages. Although much of the support for TAs is provided at the departmental level, the Office of Instructional Development (OID) coordinates a number of university-wide support services. These services include a handbook for TAs, a TA training program, screening of international TAs, and an outstanding TA recognition program. Graduate teaching assistants are informed of these services during the orientation program for new graduate students at the beginning of each year.

Support Services

The University of Georgia *Handbook for Graduate Teaching Assistants* is a 150-page document prepared jointly by the OID and the Graduate School. The first chapter provides an introduction to the role of the teaching assistant and a review of university policies and procedures. This introduction is followed by a chapter on course planning and a chapter that presents a discussion of the dimensions of effective teaching and provides advice on teaching methods and testing strategies. The final two chapters of the handbook deal with drawing the course to a successful conclusion and instructional resources that are available to TAs. This handbook is published and sold by the university bookstore. A number of departments purchase the handbook for distribution to all TAs; others recommend purchase of the handbook to their TAs.

The TA training program offered by the OID is a two-quarter credit-hour course taught under the title "Graduate School Course 777 Graduate Internship." This optional course is taught on a pass/fail basis by the OID staff in cooperation with the Graduate School. The course meets in one two-hour session each week for an entire quarter. Topics covered in the course include: characteristics of effective teachers, course planning, teaching strategies, writing good tests, dealing with students, and evaluating teaching effectiveness. Students in the course are given the opportunity to observe a number of outstanding teachers and each student participates in a videotaped microteaching exercise. One section of the course is offered each quarter and enrollment is open to any graduate student. This course is optional, however, and enrolls only a small percent of the total TA population.

The institutionally administered version of the Test of Spoken English, the SPEAK test, is used to screen international TAs at the University of Georgia.

Every international graduate student whose native language is not English must take this test before receiving a TA appointment. The test is administered by the university's language laboratory and the test results are evaluated by the English as a Second Language (ESL) program staff. An evaluation of the test results is forwarded by the ESL staff to each student's department head. This evaluation includes a recommendation of whether the test results support the appointment of the student as a TA. This recommendation is only advisory, but the department heads have followed the ESL staff recommendation in virtually all cases.

In the spring of 1986 the university implemented an outstanding teaching assistant awards program coordinated by the OID. In order to be nominated for one of these awards a TA must have taught for at least two quarters and be recognized as among the top 10 percent of the TAs in his or her school or college. All nominations must include supporting letters from the TA's supervisor and summaries of student evaluations. A faculty review committee screens the nominations and makes the final selection of award recipients. The total number of recipients is limited to 10 percent of the eligible TA population. Each recipient is recognized at the university's awards day and receives a certificate of award.

Plans for the Future

In addition to the four support services described above, the OID currently is considering two additional activities. The first is a one-day workshop for all new TAs to be held at the beginning of the school year. The current training program offered by the OID reaches less than 10 percent of the university's TAs and a university-wide workshop would ensure that every TA receives some training before entering the classroom. This workshop would be designed to complement, not replace, departmental training programs. The second program will be a language and culture course for international graduate students. At present we have no course designed specifically to prepare these students for their roles as TAs. An international student who fails the SPEAK test screening currently does not have access to training designed to provide the background necessary to enter the classroom as instructor. This new course, taught by the ESL staff, would fill this void.

William K. Jackson is Associate Director of the Office of Instructional Development at the University of Georgia.

An Overview of an Orientation Program for Graduate Teaching Associates at The Ohio State University

Nancy L. Zimpher and Suzan Yessayan

Since the first pilot in 1982, the College of Education at The Ohio State University, in concert with the Office of Academic Affairs, has conducted a large, university-wide workshop for teaching assistants (called teaching associates at OSU) on an annual basis. This paper will describe the historical context from which the present workshop has evolved and will outline how the fifth annual Teaching Associate Workshop was organized at The Ohio State University.

Those who are contemplating the conception of a university-wide workshop will most likely start with the question, "why organize a TA workshop?" Indeed, in addressing this question, we need to consider both the context of three national committee reports on the state of higher education and the specific needs of TAs that are endemic to a large university environment.

Individual reports prepared by commissions chaired by Mortimer (1984), Bennett (1984), and Curtis (1985) offer unique but compatible indictments of current conditions in higher education. They also present definitions of good teaching and offer recommendations for improvement. These commission reports provide a variety of recommendations to provoke and encourage good teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The appearance of these three major national reports on higher education and their particular reference to the quality of college teaching would suggest an element of urgency in the concern over the preparation of TAs.

At The Ohio State University, 39% of instruction is performed by TAs. We enroll over 7,000 graduate students, of whom 2,200 are employed as TAs. In the combined total of 2,394 professors (full, associate, and assistant), 57% of their effort was devoted to instruction. In contrast, 1,200 TAs who reported quarterly activity data indicate that they devote 95% of their time to instruction. More to the point, TAs are responsible for a large percentage of student contact in lower-division courses and thereby directly affect the quality of undergraduate education.

The problems TAs encounter in meeting their teaching duties are not unique to OSU. As with many universities in the nation, some TAs may be thrust into their new role as instructor with limited or no previous teaching experience. Others, even experienced as teachers, may be wrestling with problems of curricular content, organization, preparation, and evaluation. They may be ill-prepared, inadequately supervised, or have difficulty in handling legitimate questions from students. Difficulty with language and understanding culture and customs of American students is also a major concern for TAs from non-English-speaking countries. These TAs represent the next generation of faculty and may lack orientation to the teaching podium. The university is, therefore, committed to providing opportunities where TAs can learn (both in theory and practice) ways toward more effective teaching performance.

Historically at OSU, between 1972 and 1982, activities for TAs was a function of the university departments. However, in 1982, a resurgence of interest in TAs was launched both by the Council of Undergraduate Students and the Council of Graduate Students, who conducted a survey of both undergraduates and graduates on the role of the TA on the OSU campus and reported seven recommendations, which included: (a) training programs need to be offered for credit; (b) the development of a TA handbook is necessary; (c) the requirement of English language programs for international TAs would assist in language facility; (d) student evaluation of teaching at the department level would offer some assurances of quality; (e) roles should be an outgrowth of written job descriptions; and (f) a centralized monitoring system for departmental review and support of TAs is necessary to maintain quality instruction at all levels.

This report was concurrent with various other appointed university standing committee reports, including the controversy over the issue of English proficiency among international TAs. As interest heightened from these reports and the anxiety of students, parents, and legislators increased, the vice president for academic affairs convened an ad hoc committee to implement university-wide policies for TAs.

As a part of these policies, an initial pilot workshop was offered in 1982 to a target group of 8 departments who volunteered 80 registrants, all of whom were offered a $75 stipend for attending. As this effort has grown, we have today 50 departments representing a cross-section of diverse disciplines totaling 500 registrants at the fifth annual TA workshop.

The workshop during the early pilot was conducted over three full days. However, since 1983, as registration from departments has increased, we used five half-days so that departments could have consecutive afternoons to work with TAs. Over recent years in which the workshop has been offered, the core content categories have not changed; that is, they continue to include:

1. Pedagogy: planning for instruction and practicing various teaching strategies;
2. Human cognitive and personal development: what we need to know about college student learners and ourselves as teachers; and
3. Measurement and evaluation: how to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, how to assess students for academic progress, and issues relating to student due process.

The workshop is presently conducted over five half-days immediately prior to the autumn quarter.

In planning the fifth annual TA workshop at this university, we developed a theme based on the concept of preparing TAs to become "inquiring professionals." According to Schön (1983), there is more involved in acquiring professional skill than just applying knowledge. In his view, in becoming professional practitioners, we should require of ourselves and from the training we endure the development of "reflection-in-action." By developing a practice of inquiry and understanding through reflection, in Schön's view, we become more effective in applying knowledge as practitioners. In this "reflection-in-action" process, all professional practitioners question their reason(s), question the nature of their action, and explore through reflection the effect of their action(s) on others.

Both Sanders' (1986) perspective on practice-centered inquiry and Kemmis and McTaggart's (1982) action research model advocate the use of reflectivity as a method that can be developed to improve the instructional process and heighten personal satisfaction as an educator. Therefore, the theme of the workshop promoted the improvement of teaching through practice centered inquiry (PCI), which is built on an action research model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart. Our intention has been to encourage teaching associates to develop a form of reflective inquiry that asks questions about their own teaching practice. It is only through more systematic reflection on experience that we believe that TAs can be assisted in improving what Polanyi (1958) calls "personal knowledge" for becoming inquiring professionals.

The two essential aims of all action research activity are to improve and to involve. The aims of improvement and involvement share equal importance as stated by Grundy and Kemmis (1982). They claim the aims of improvement fall into these categories: first, to improve practice; second, to improve professional development (or an understanding of practice from a practitioner's viewpoint); and third, to improve the situation where practice occurs. In improving practice, the practitioner becomes involved in the action research process.

The four fundamental aspects of the action research process are:

1. *Plan*–developing a plan of action toward improving practice;
2. *Act*–implementing the plan;
3. *Observe*–studying the effects of action where it occurs through observation; and
4. *Reflect*–reflecting on the effects observed for a succession of further cycles.

According to Grundy and Kemmis, the first action "moment" of the cycle, i.e., a single loop of plan, act, observe, and reflect, extends the process into a spiral of review and improvement. In this sense, the cycle does not stop with new planned action, but serves as a basis for further review and improvement. More to the point, their model is a dynamic integrated process and not a series of isolated, static steps.

As can be seen in Figure 1, all sessions were scheduled according to this four-step plan. During the segment of "plan," for example, TAs were required to develop a five-minute lesson as their videotaped microteaching activity. This was presented by each participant within mentoring sessions later in the week.

Figure 1. The Simplified Workshop Schedule

Mon. 8-12	Tues. 8-12	Wed. 8-12	Thurs. 8-12	Fri. 8-12
Overview	*Plan*	*Act*	*Observe*	*Reflect*
General Session	General Session	Focus Session	Focus Session	Summary
Mentoring Session	Mentoring Session	Microteaching during Mentoring Session	Microteaching during Mentoring Session	
	Focus Session			

We journeyed through several stages of planning the workshop schedule with the help of a planning committee consisting of five to six faculty members and one full-time graduate research associate. A major objective with regard to this large-scale project has consistently been to select faculty who demonstrate expertise in the content areas presented. Not only are they knowledgeable; they are, as reported by workshop participants, dynamic teaching models who can not only convey information but also model delivery styles useful to TAs in their own practice.

Over the years, we have varied the workshop format and currently provide more mentoring sessions and a reduced number of general lectures in the series. The purpose of the mentoring session is to offer TAs an opportunity to reflect on large-group presentations and to give mentor session leaders an opportunity to interject experiences and individualize expertise about college teaching. The mentoring session design required the clustering of about 20 TAs per instructor and was staffed by a team of an experienced professor and an experienced TA.

An interesting aspect of scheduling a mentoring session format is that it allows graduate students to learn through coleading and facilitates learning among peers. In some of the studies cited, McKeachie (1978) reports that discussion groups led by students represent a very effective supplement to large lecture sessions.

The mentoring sessions offered workshop participants an informal learning climate where students could be comfortable in raising concerns and difficulties about teaching. When microteaching activities were planned to occur during mentoring sessions, group leaders observed that feedback on individual teaching performance from videotaped replays was facilitated by the small-group and informal discussion format.

McKeachie claims first that students teaching students allows more disclosure about fears in a small group environment; second, students relate to other meaningful experiences; and third, students teaching other students learn themselves from sharing. These small support groups enhanced the amount of peer interaction. Those who responded to the postevaluation questions commented on the sense of connectedness or belongingness with their group. More specifically, they valued the opportunity to become familiar with TAs from other disciplines who shared common concerns and experiences.

On the first day of the TA workshop, participants were assigned to a mentoring session group before receiving an overview of the workshop schedule. They were randomly assigned to their group in advance of the workshop. Once registered for the workshop, TAs were seated within their mentoring group. This established a setting in which TAs could form connections with peer members and the group entity.

By the end of the workshop, TAs expressed a desire to continue group contact into the quarter. A poignant analogy then would be to see the mentoring group sessions as an umbilical cord–as a central source of emotional support and an invaluable means to web continued learning.

During this past workshop, more flexible focus sessions were organized so that TAs could choose which of those were more applicable to their needs. They were organized to accommodate diverse interests and specialties.

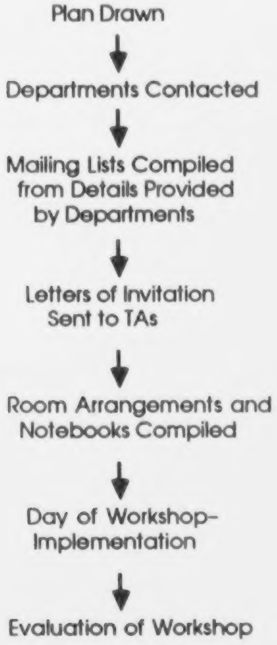
Over the years, we have had increased participation from TAs who enrich the TA workshop with diverse cultures and disciplines. Logistically, it is extremely difficult to offer focus sessions on every represented field. Being sensitive to both issues of diverse needs and logistic difficulties, we designed a series of different clustered and focus sessions based on compatible educational needs. For example, we designed a focus session on laboratory instruction for those TAs who may have represented or provided instruction within a similar setting. Another focus session was designed for performance instruction, largely for those TAs in theatre, dance, and music. Each focus session consisted of a presentation on a topic and discussions of the implications for and applications of topics on college teaching.

In the five half-days, the organization of the schedule on any given day included one or two major lectures plus a mentoring session. A summary session on the fifth day of the workshop included a candid personalized reflection on experiences from the university ombudsperson and other presentations from the provost and vice president of academic affairs and the president of the Council of Graduate Students. Workshop participants were given an opportunity to evaluate and reflect on the week's activities on the last day.

The planning and implementation of the workshop is an all-year responsibility. The complex logistics involved in organizing a university-wide workshop necessitate efficient and effective coordination and collaboration throughout the project.

Figure 2 displays a flowchart of events in the organization of the TA workshop.

Figure 2. Stages in Workshop Organization


Plan Drawn
Departments Contacted
Mailing Lists Compiled from Details Provided by Departments
Letters of Invitation Sent to TAs
Room Arrangements and Notebooks Compiled
Day of Workshop-Implementation
Evaluation of Workshop

Once a strategy was devised in the planning stage, departments across campus were contacted and asked to indicate whether a representative group of TAs would attend the workshop, and to forward details on participants. The name, address, and department of each participant were entered into a computer to compile a mailing list. Both local and summer addresses of each student were requested from each department to ensure TAs received notification of the workshop event. Many follow-up calls were made to verify changes in information pertaining to participants. Second, updated versions of the mailing list were produced, which later assisted in the assignment of the participants to mentoring sessions and with name-tag distribution.

Letters of invitation were sent to those TAs whose names appeared on department lists. More names were continually received at the same time as letters of invitation were being sent. The letter contained information concerning the workshop, but more importantly it contained a request for the TAs to return a preprinted registration form indicating their interest in attending.

Regular lecture rooms and classrooms were scheduled around campus. A ballroom within a student union center complex was booked for the opening day's proceedings, where a collective meeting of all participants was possible. At the same time, various other arrangements were being finalized including seating, printing of signs for directions, equipment, and refreshment arrangements.

A workshop notebook was distributed to participants on registration day. It contained mainly articles based on the topics covered in the general and focus sessions.

An analysis of responses to open-ended questions on follow-up evaluation forms and informal reactions and comments from workshop participants indicate the workshop was positively received. Respondents commented favorably about the atmosphere and content of the workshop. In the postworkshop evaluations, TAs expressed a genuine seriousness about their efforts and effectiveness as teachers and as representatives of their departments and the university as a whole.

We are encouraged by these favorable responses. At the same time, however, there are critical continuing concerns that we share; namely, follow-up on the orientation of TAs at the department level is essential. We need to encourage departments to conduct needs assessment to identify specific concerns and needs of their department TAs. An extension to this concern is the need for continued campus-wide needs assessments and continuing sessions for instructional development. Data need to be collected at both the department and university level to assist us in truly meeting the concerns of our TAs.

In addition, a research agenda for studying the effects of these workshops is an area needing extension. It is important to assess the degree of value TAs receive from our workshop. More true research designs need to be implemented in order to present the impact of a true intervention. The data collected would benefit us in determining how best to orient our TAs.

In the organization of a campus-wide university TA workshop, many stages of planning were involved in the development and implementation process. We believe our efforts in organizing a workshop for TAs will make a more significant impact on instructional improvement at The Ohio State University as we refine our plans from year to year.

In this paper, we provided some historical context of how we have arrived, explained important themes of the university workshop, and presented a simplified outline of the logistics in the organization of the fifth annual Teaching Associate Workshop at this university.

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Nancy L. Zimpher is Assistant Professor and Suzan Yessayan is Graduate Research Associate in the College of Education at The Ohio State University.

The Graduate Student Orientation Program at Bowling Green State University

Joanne Martin-Reynolds and Marian Smith Hurley

The Graduate Student Orientation Program at Bowling Green serves about 500 graduate students during the summer and approximately 100 additional students during the autumn and spring semesters. The goals of the program are primarily to support the teaching and research skills of the graduate assistants and fellows as they fulfill their academic duties and classroom responsibilities. However, the program also offers assistance with resources and references available on campus and in the city of Bowling Green, Ohio.

Program Organization

The Graduate College has made a major commitment to the program through summer assistantships for four coordinators and a full academic-year assistantship for an assistant director. This institutional support has helped the program move toward a more detailed planning and evaluation process as well as a stronger academic program.

An advisory council consisting of faculty and administrators aids the director in recommending changes in programming and evaluation. The council members also assist in selecting the coordinators and orientation leaders.

Approximately 40 graduate orientation leaders represent the academic departments. These orientation leaders serve as mentors to incoming teaching and research assistants/fellows and plan their respective departmental programs with faculty and administrators. For the August 1986 program, the orientation leaders were assigned to the four coordinators. This proved to be worthwhile in keeping departments consistent in planning their programs and in keeping open lines of communication.

Program Planning

The program planning process is aimed at serving both teaching and research assistants/fellows. The problem is trying to find enough willing, able, and available session presenters. For example, more than 120 presenters were needed during the five-day period in August 1986.

The program is designed to give students flexibility in choosing from all-university generic sessions and departmental programs. Generic sessions include three main categories: teaching, research, and personal and professional development. Session offerings fall basically into two groups: those for TAs and those for RAs. However, some of the offerings in the RA group are applicable to the students in the TA group, and vice versa. A list of the 1986 session offerings showing those sessions specifically for TAs and RAs and those that would be helpful to both TAs and RAs is included in Appendix A.

The departmental offerings are critical in order for students to receive enough training in the content methodology as well as in generic skills. In the 1986 program, students had the opportunity to attend 17 different sessions. However, one problem still remains to be solved: presenters covering the same material.

Registration Process

The biggest change in the 1986 program was the registration process. Since attending the program is a Graduate College requirement, it was necessary to keep track of students' choices as well as monitor their attendance at the sessions. An arena-style scheduling process was used in which all 500 students selected their 17 sessions during the Sunday afternoon or Monday morning prior to the program.

For scheduling purposes and in keeping with the teaching and research categories, teaching assistants/fellows were assigned to two groups: TA-I and TA-II; research assistants/fellows were assigned to groups RA-I and RA-II. Students who were not assigned to a specific teaching or research appointment and second-year students were able to select sessions from either group.

Orientation leaders assisted in the registration process by carrying out the functions of the check-in and check-out tables and the 28 session registration tables. Since maximum enrollments were set for each session, orientation leaders also advised students about second and third choices if first and second-choice sessions were filled.

As students went through the registration process, they completed a program schedule. The orientation leader who registered a student for a session placed an adhesive-backed session label on the student's copy of the schedule and wrote the session letter in the appropriate box on a copy for our use. At check-in time, students were given a supply of adhesive-backed labels showing their names and departments. They gave one of these labels to orientation leaders to affix to a "slot" on a session registration form to show they had registered for a particular session. After the schedule was completed, the student took it to the check-out point, where an orientation leader verified the schedule as complete and retained our copy. Students' selections were then entered into the Appleworks database program. This was used later to generate session rosters and departmental rosters.

Orientation Week

The directors and the coordinators supervised the 1986 program operations from a "headquarters" that was centrally located on campus. Orientation leaders assisted during orientation week by introducing session presenters, taking attendance at sessions, picking up and returning session folders containing session rosters and evaluation forms, monitoring the resource center, and directing the students from their respective departments.

Program Evaluations

The following four types of evaluations were used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the 1986 program:

1. Session evaluations done by the attendees immediately following the session;
2. Overall program evaluation done by students at the end of the week-long program;

3. Overall program evaluation done by the orientation leaders at the end of the program; and

4. Training evaluation done by the coordinators at the end of the program.

After the results of the evaluations were tabulated, a summary was given to the dean of the Graduate College and the department chairs and graduate advisors. Individual session presenters received a summary of their own evaluations as well as the raw data. The directors and coordinators will use the evaluation results to improve future programs.

The directors and the 1987 coordinators are already planning for the August 1987 program. The staff, along with the to-be-appointed orientation leaders, will spend a considerable amount of time and energy in planning, organizing, developing, and administering the program. However, we feel it is time and energy well spent because of the feedback from students regarding how helpful the program has been to them in performing their duties and responsibilities as well as in helping them adjust to graduate school life.

Appendix A

August 1986 Session Offerings

TA Sessions

Stimulating Student Motivation in the Classroom; Conversations with presenter (at a later session)
Techniques of Teaching; Conversations with presenter
The Power of Positive Invitations to Learning; Conversations with presenter
Ethics in Teaching
Professional Ethics: Vis-à-Vis Sexual Harassment
Nonacademic Referrals: How? Where? Why?
The Adult Learner
What Can I Expect from College Freshmen?
Academic Enhancement Program
What Are Some Skills of Effective Teaching?
Planning a Dynamic Lesson
Integrating the Library into the Curriculum
Selecting & Using Films/Videotapes for Instruction
The Computer As an Electronic Chalkboard
Workshop in Small-Format Video Production
Effective Lecturing Techniques
Questioning Strategies for Good Teaching
Effective Nonverbal Communications in the Classroom
Grading and Evaluation

Both TA and RA Sessions

The Role of Research in Graduate Education
Choosing Thesis/Dissertation/Topic Committee
Research Funding/Grantsmanship
The ABCs of Degree-Oriented Research
Use of Human Subjects in Research
Overview of Computer Services
Overview of Statistical Consulting Services
How to Present Your Research Findings
An Overview of the Instructional Media Center
Effective Presentations with the Overhead Projector
Writing for Publication in the Social Sciences
Writing for Publication–Humanities
Writing for Publication–Physical Sciences
Staying Alive: Basic Library Survival Skills
On-line Computer Library Center (OCLC)
Center for Archival Collections
Data Archive
Computerized Literature Searching
Computers: Appleworks Program

Appendix A (continued)

TA Sessions

Feedback for Better Teaching
Microteaching
Assisting Students to Write Research Papers
Increasing Student Achievement
Teaching Reading across the Curriculum
Teaching in the Laboratory Setting

RA Sessions

Ethics in Research
Role and Responsibilities of Research Assistants
Myths and Realities of Research
Research Assistants Speak

Both TA and RA Sessions

Computers: Macwrite Program
Computers: Personal Editor
Understanding Cross-Cultural Relations
International Students: Language, Culture, Teaching Methodology
Stress Management
Time Management
Cultural/Leisure Pursuits
Reading/Study Skills for Graduate School
University Writing Center: Aid to Better Writing
University Services (Resource Center)
Community Services (Resource Center)
Financial Assistance: Where and How
Career Counseling: Opportunities for Liberal Arts Students
University Placement Center
Graduate Student Senate

Joanne Martin-Reynolds is Director and Marian Smith Hurley is Assistant Director of the Graduate Student Orientation Program at Bowling Green State University.

The TA Seminar and TA Support Services at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville

W. Lee Humphreys

Renewed attention to the quality of undergraduate education–most visible in recent national reports by the Association of American Colleges, National Institute of Education, and others, but also widespread on campuses across the country, along with concern about retention of undergraduates by budget-minded administrators–has focused attention on graduate teaching assistants and the preparation they receive. TAs stand on the front line, often as the first instructors encountered by entering freshmen in larger colleges and universities, and they can fundamentally shape for good or ill a student's academic program. I will describe a system of training and support for TAs now offered by the University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK).

In 1979 the UTK Faculty Senate established through its faculty development committee a seminar on teaching for TAs. Funds were provided by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (now the Office of the Provost). The program has since been institutionalized by making it one of the instructional development activities of the Learning Research Center (LRC). The director of the LRC chairs the steering committee that designs and evaluates the seminar.

The seminar seeks to address two fundamental concerns:

1. Since at UTK TAs have partial or total responsibility for the teaching of a wide range of courses, especially at the lower divisions of the undergraduate level, efforts to enhance their instructional efforts should improve significantly the academic program at the university. This seems especially critical in a period of concern for the retention of capable students, for TAs often have the first sustained instructional contact with undergraduates. There are strong indications that the quality of students' initial course experiences influences not only whether they will continue but also the quality of their later work.

2. Many graduate students–most in a number of fields–will become professional academics. Graduate training, as professional training for academics, is now centered on the development of research capabilities. Little sustained attention is regularly given to teaching as a part of one's professional training or objectives. This occurs in spite of evidence that many of today's graduate students will be placed in contexts where teaching expectations will be heavy and range over a broad spectrum of courses.

The UTK TA seminar has two segments:

1. An intensive four-day introduction for all participants to a number of instructional activities and contexts for reflection on teaching; and

2. Participation in two small groups that meet through the autumn quarter, each designed to build upon the material presented in the first segment in the context of the TA's own discipline and specific teaching assignments.

Segment 1 involves a range of presentations to the total group as well as smaller discussion groups. Each day has a particular theme:

Day 1: The UTK Student and UTK. The nature and characteristics of students at UTK–entering freshmen, upperclass undergraduates, graduate students, and international students–are considered, along with resources available to help instructors in working with them. A special session is held for international TAs in conjunction with a retreat for all foreign students sponsored by UTK's Center for International Education.

Day 2: Strategies for Instruction. Reviews of learning styles, communication in the classroom, and course planning are accompanied by tips on such instructional activities as lecturing, leading discussions, using media, lab work, use of computers, and performance oriented work in courses.

Day 3: Assessment. Both aspects of assessment are considered–assessment and evaluation of students (testing and grading), and the evaluation of courses and instruction by students, peers, self, and others.

Day 4: Setting an Academic Climate. Presentations range from reflections on the meaning and purpose of baccalaureate education to issues related to various forms of cheating and how they might be confronted. The day's program begins with a panel of four outstanding instructors whom the participants in the seminar can question as they wish, and it ends with a panel of outstanding TAs. This gives TAs the last word in this part of the program.

Each day provides a balance between general presentations to the whole group on general issues and smaller group meetings on more specific topics. The latter offer a context for interaction between seminar members and with the leaders. Each day participants select from five or six discussion groups two or three that best meet their specific assignments and responsibilities. Thus we seek to take account of the wide range of instructional activities in which different TAs must engage.

This segment of the seminar ends with a wine and cheese reception bringing the TAs together and recognizing them as an essential part of the instructional staff of the university. Emphasis on their part in the instructional efforts of the university is further developed in the two small group meetings to which each is assigned.

One group is led by a member of the steering committee for the TA seminar and is devoted to discussion on issues that arise in the course of their teaching in the autumn quarter. Problems encountered in initial teaching efforts are shared, journals are kept, and audio- and/or videotapes of the TA's actual instruction are reviewed in individual conferences.

The second group is led by a departmental coordinator and is designed to consider instruction in terms of the nature of the TAs' specific disciplines and the particular needs of their departments. It also deals with the issues that arise from the dual role of the TA as both part of the professional instructional staff and as student.

Some large departments or units at UTK design their own training for TAs, and the seminar is not designed to replace those where a critical mass makes such efforts desirable. At present the TA seminar is required by a few departments or colleges and recommended by others. Three hours of graduate academic credit is awarded on a pass/no credit basis.

Faculty, deans, and central administrators from across the campus make presentations to the seminar and lead discussion sections. Representatives of several colleges serve on the steering committee and as group leaders. Departments whose TAs take part are asked to name a coordinator to lead the discipline-based small groups.

Future goals center on fine tuning the seminar further to meet the diverse assignments of TAs from many distinct disciplines, expansion of TA participation, and making the program an essential and regular part of professional graduate training at UTK for those who teach as graduate students and those who will enter the academic community.

In this way the seminar will continue to play a role, not only in the enhancement of instruction on the UTK campus, but in providing more balanced preparation of those who will enter academic professions in the future.

The seminar is augmented by a range of additional programs and services:

1. *A Handbook for New Instructors* contains materials for the seminar and other information and resources on teaching and learning. It is also given to all new faculty at UTK.

2. A newsletter, *The GTA at UTK* , is published three times each year by the LRC and the Graduate School. Each issue has a lead article on some generic aspect of teaching and learning, with additional news of awards won by TAs, programs of interest, a piece addressed specifically to international TAs, and some bibliographic information.

3. A consultation service is provided by two experienced TAs. Following a regular procedure, and with assurance of complete confidentiality, they will visit a TA's class on request and either observe or discuss aspects of the course and instruction with students in the class. Pre- and postconferences with the TA set the stage and provide follow-up reflection. The TAs who provide the service not only are experienced teachers and counselors, but are in the same position as other TAs: They face classes and dissertations as well as instructional responsibilities.

4. The instructional support services of the Learning Research Center at UTK are available to TAs as they are to faculty. These include course/instructor evaluation services.

5. Additional programs are scheduled for TAs throughout the academic year. These deal with such basic issues in teaching and learning as testing, grading, leading discussions, patterns of learning, reentry students–their needs and potential, and conflict management.

The outline for the seminar and the handbook, as well as copies of the newsletter, are available through the Learning Research Center, 1819 Andy Holt Avenue, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-4350.

W. Lee Humphreys is Director of the Learning Research Center at the University of Tennessee.

TA Training at the University of Louisville: Creating a Climate

Howard B. Altman

Prior to the 1984-1985 academic year, whatever training was provided to graduate teaching assistants (TAs) at the University of Louisville could be characterized in two ways: (a) individual departments did their "own thing" (and often that meant relatively little); and (b) such training as was provided tended to be course-specific (i.e., procedures for handling one's duties in a given course, with little effort to provide any more generalizable training). Some departments took TA training more seriously, assigning TA supervision to a faculty member who received a course reduction in exchange for supervisory duties (but whose supervisory duties themselves were rarely, if ever, evaluated by the department chair or anyone else). In the main, however, TAs learned whatever they learned about teaching by talking with their fellow TAs and by trial and error.

The University of Louisville became part of the state system of higher education in Kentucky in the early 1970s and experienced enormous growth thereafter. With a student body of about 20,000, the university employs about 150 TAs and many other graduate research and graduate service assistants. In the autumn semester of 1983, the university president decided to commit funds for a centralized faculty development program that–despite the urging of some faculty for almost a decade–had not existed prior to that time. (It is true that various projects and programs had been funded both at the decanal level and at the academic vice president's level, but a program as such, with a faculty coordinator to direct it, was lacking. As a by-product of that concern with faculty development, a centralized program for TA training was instituted in the 1984-85 academic year. The program was designed to complement, not replace, departmental endeavors since it is clear that course-specific instruction is essential if TAs are to provide undergraduate students with valid and reliable education.

Two components of a centralized TA training program were developed: (a) a preacademic year orientation for all new TAs; and (b) a series of pedagogical and professional seminars, held twice each semester exclusively for TAs and presided over by outstanding faculty members. The entire program was run by the Center for Faculty and Staff Development in cooperation with the Office of Graduate Programs and Research.

The orientation for new TAs was designed to run two full days, with the second afternoon assigned to individual departments to hold department-specific orientations. Thus, one-and-a-half days were devoted to a university-wide orientation. The components of that orientation were as follows:

- Welcoming remarks from the director of the Center for Faculty and Staff Development and from the dean of Graduate Programs and Research;
- Comments on "The Graduate School and You" by the associate dean;
- A discussion of the roles and responsibilities of TAs presented by a professor of English who served as coordinator of graduate students in the English department;

- A discussion of "student and faculty rights for TAs" presented by the assistant vice president for student development;
- Short presentations on the role and functions of the university's Counseling Center and of the Instructional Communications Center (which provides all mediated instruction campus-wide);
- A presentation on "tips for better teaching, testing, and grading," which put forth some generalizable assumptions about teaching and evaluating undergraduates;
- A discussion entitled "Developing Your Philosophy as a Teacher," presented by a professor of philosophy who had been a winner of the outstanding teaching award at the university; and
- An extended faculty development exercise entitled "Developing One's Values in Teaching," which filled the morning of the second day of the orientation.

After several years of running such an orientation, we have concluded two things: (a) the orientation serves a vital and much needed purpose in introducing new TAs to the services of the campus, the places to go for help, the campus-wide procedures (where they exist) for dealing with difficulties, etc.; and (b) the orientation is not nearly long enough to provide sufficient pedagogical background and demonstrations for TAs who will be called upon to teach classes scarcely a week later. Thus, it is our intention to expand the orientation to a full five-day period, and to require all new TAs to participate. The additional days will be devoted to demonstrations and discussions of teaching strategies, test construction, classroom problems, role playing, and the like.

The seminars for TAs that have been held twice per semester have focused on topics selected by TAs themselves from a list circulated by the Center for Faculty and Staff Development. Among the topics that have been presented in the past two years are:

- Choosing Your Appropriate Teaching Style
- Tips for Better Testing
- Careers in University Teaching and Administration
- Options in Personalizing Learning
- Presentation and discussion of videocassettes on "The Role of the TA" and "Encounters With Teaching" (produced by the University of Washington)
- Using the Computer as a Teaching and Research Tool

Attendance at these seminars has been voluntary, and has not always been what we desired because of class conflicts, little support by department chairs, forgetfulness, and other valid or invalid excuses. The lessons we have learned from the seminar program are: (a) send announcements about seminars directly to TAs by name–do not depend on the department chair to "spread the news"; (b) provide food (and publicize this fact)–it serves an an excellent "extrinsic motivator" to attend; (c) provide incentives (other than free food) to encourage attendance. We plan to initiate a "certificate of attendance" program–similar to the program developed by the University of California at Davis (see the article by Will Davis in this volume)–that will award a certificate to those TAs who attend 75% of the seminars we hold next year. Such a certificate may be of value to those seeking teaching positions, for it attests that they have been at least exposed to pedagogical and professional thinking (which, other things being equal, may give them an advantage in the job market).

The University of Louisville's centralized TA training program is far from optimal in its present configuration, but we have created a climate where it is possible to plan for more extensive support and assistance for apprentice teachers with the full support of the university's faculty and administration. I hope to report on our progress in a future year.

Howard B. Altman is Director of the Center for Faculty and Staff Development at the University of Louisville.

A Seminar on College Teaching

Delivee L. Wright

Introduction

Higher education today is being criticized for the quality of education being provided for undergraduate students. One cause of this condition has been traced to the education and training of graduate teaching assistants and especially those who are likely to follow careers in college teaching. They are proficient in their content fields, and have demonstrated skills of research, but, too often, they have not had occasion to systematically consider processes and skills of teaching their content to others.

In response to this need, a graduate seminar in college teaching was designed at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. While credit was offered through the Teachers College, instruction was provided by the Teaching and Learning Center, a campus-wide teaching resource center for faculty. This center was viewed as a "neutral" center and had a tradition on the campus for offering interdisciplinary teaching development programs.

Seminar Content

The major goal of this seminar was to provide for participants a systematic way of examining the variables that should be considered when planning instruction, and to enable the participants to make rational, conscious decisions about what would be done in the context of these variables. Teaching was approached as a problem solving exercise in which a variety of equally appropriate solutions emerge depending upon changes in the contextual variables. Major variables included factors related to student characteristics (motivation, backgrounds, learning styles, principles of learning, intellectual stages of development); teacher characteristics (preferences, roles, philosophies, skills); institutional factors (role, mission, curriculum); content factors (depth, breadth, complexity, and nature of concepts); and teaching resources (facilities, equipment, media production services, and other support services).

Topics for the seminar were reflected in the following course objectives:

1. Identify your own philosophical orientation to the role of the college teacher as it relates to other optional points of view.
2. Recognize generally accepted theories of learning as they affect student motivation, retention, learning efficiency, and individual learning styles, and relate these theories to methods used in the classroom.
3. Examine cultural factors that define roles of college teachers.
4. Be able to describe strengths and weaknesses as well as demonstrate a variety of teaching strategies appropriate for the college classroom such as: lecture methods, small group approaches, recitation, self-instructional devices (CAI, audio-tutorial, programmed, etc.), tutoring, and simulation and gaming.
5. Identify important considerations in selection of appropriate classroom strategies.

6. Develop skill in the use of basic instructional behaviors including: questioning, clarifying, reinforcing, and organizing.

7. Be able to apply basic principles of instructional design to your content area to produce:

- A clear statement of objectives incorporating consideration of *various* levels of learning;
- Task analyses leading to coherent learning; and
- Evaluations reflecting achievement toward instructional objectives.

8. Recognize strengths and weaknesses of types of tests and methods of analyzing test results.

9. Be able to integrate instructional planning, strategies, and skills in the context of your classroom to produce an effective learning setting.

Credit and Activities

This seminar could be taken for either two or three credit hours. It met in two-hour, weekly sessions during a full semester. For an optional, additional hour of credit, students did a related research paper or project or participated in a presemester workshop. The additional hour allowed adaption of the course to many individual needs.

Instructional activities in the class period were used to model a variety of the teaching strategies discussed in the class. In addition to readings on each topic, participants were asked to demonstrate their use of skills on many of the topics. Each participant applied skills in a microteaching setting in which videotaped demonstrations were analyzed one to three times a semester. Those who were actively teaching a class on the campus could be videotaped while practicing skills with their regular students as an alternative to microteaching. Other activities included: observations of outstanding professors with an analysis of observed behaviors; practice in writing and analyzing well written objectives and test items; midterm feedback and analysis of teaching by students (for those actually teaching); and a final project. The final project required the participants to synthesize topics of the seminar into an instructional plan for their own content areas and to describe the contextual factors and rationales for the decisions made.

Participants

The participants in this seminar varied from an interdisciplinary group of graduate students who had college teaching as a career goal to a group of teaching assistants who were all in the same discipline and were currently teaching. New faculty and faculty from area colleges also have enrolled.

Readings

Readings for the seminar came from a variety of periodicals and texts from the library of the TLC. Many selected handouts developed for faculty by the center staff have also been utilized. While no single text was utilized, the following references were especially useful:

Bigge, M. L. (1976). *Learning theories for teachers* (3rd Ed.). New York: Harper and Row.

Chickering, A., & Associates. (1981). *The modern American college.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fuhrman, B. S. & Grasha, A. F. (1983). *A practical handbook for college teachers.* Boston: Little, Brown.

Guides for the improvement of instruction in higher education. (1977). East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, Board of Trustees.

McKeachie, W. J. (1986). *Teaching tips: A guidebook for the beginning college teacher* (8th Ed.). Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath.

Conclusion

Credit courses in college teaching may have considerable variation in content according to the background of the course instructor. Nonetheless, they tend to be oriented to the development of basic teaching tools of the college professor and to increasing awareness about the context of the professorial role. Activities that encourage translation of theory into practice are essential. Typically, materials are gathered from many sources with no single textbook.

These courses represent a long overdue dimension to the preparation of future college teachers. They add expertise in teaching methodology to the traditional study of the discipline and of research methodology.

Delivee L. Wright is the Director of the Teaching and Learning Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Courses on College Teaching

Frank J. Vattano and John S. Avens

In June of 1971 a national conference was held as part of the Project to Improve College Teaching sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of University Professors. The conference was held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, at St. John's College. The person chosen to direct the project was our own Kenneth Eble, who is presenting the keynote address at this conference. One of the main topics considered at this time was how we in the professoriate allow our profession to continue under the implicit assumption that "to know is to be able to teach." Those of us in attendance spent several hours one afternoon focusing on the totally inadequate preparation for college teaching most of us experienced as graduate students. You can just imagine the horror stories we all shared about "how it was done to us." What we really learned about college teaching was to reject what we thought did not work and to apply what seemed to be effective with us in terms of classroom teaching and research.

Well, here we are in 1986 seemingly addressing the same topic. But many things have changed along the way. I remember vividly the excitement I experienced from the Santa Fe conference. Upon my return to my campus I put together a group of department chairs with the full support of my immediate supervisor, the academic vice president. We talked about a seminar for graduate students devoted to the topics of college teaching that applied to all members of the university regardless of discipline. We also considered the questions: (a) What population should be addressed? (b) Should the seminar be discipline-based or interdisciplinary in scope? (c) Should it be required or optional? (d) Where should such an experience be housed–department, college, or across the university? (e) Who would organize and present the various topics? (f) How would the seminar be funded? (g) How would we evaluate the experience? In an attempt to resolve these and other issues we settled on a seminar housed in the Graduate School. The graduate seminar would be an optional, two-credit-hour course, interdisciplinary in nature (with no more than two graduate students from a single department), organized and presented by the office of the academic vice president, taught primarily by faculty within the institution, and funded centrally, as all instructional development activities on campus.

We were off–we had a "Seminar on College Teaching." It belonged to no department, and the student-credit-hour issue was not of concern because I would direct the seminar. Since I was an administrator, it did not make any difference. My colleague, Dr. Robert W. Titley, another psychologist, and I spent some time developing topics that, from our experience, we thought would be useful beginnings for graduate students who aspired to become college teachers. The seminar was initiated under the joint auspices of the Assistant Academic Vice President for Instructional Development and the Graduate School, and would carry the course number of GS (graduate school) 792. We have also been developing and continue to offer seminars, workshops, and other professional development opportunities both to graduate students and faculty since 1971.

The seminar on college teaching has been offered to graduate students each term for the past 15 years and, as a result of our contact with approximately 400 graduate students, we have learned a great deal about their concerns and apprehensions, and limitations and capabilities, as potential college teachers. Although the individual topics have varied considerably over the years, we have settled on about 15 topics that seem to serve the needs of graduate teaching assistants and those who aspire to the professoriate. We have found microteaching to be an invaluable dimension this seminar course offers the practicing and prospective college teacher. Each student enrolled in the seminar (we have come to limit the enrollment to 12 students per term) has two opportunities to present a small segment of a course or topic. The presentation is videotaped, immediately played back, and critiqued by the other seminar participants and the two seminar coordinators.

Dr. John S. (Jack) Avens, professor of food science, coauthor of this paper, and I have continued to team teach (coordinate) the seminar. Although we utilize the services of other faculty on many of the individual topics, we both insist that we be present at all sessions. We both contribute our perspectives to the topic under consideration, thereby complementing the contributions of the guest faculty. Jack and I are responsible for the planning and conduct of the seminar and its various associated collateral activities. At the end of each semester we solicit extensive verbal and written course evaluations from the enrolled students focused toward improving the seminar for future semesters. As a result of these many course evaluations, we have settled on more or less standardized topics and approaches to them that appear to meet the needs of our students, at least as a first step toward what we hope will be a rewarding career as members of the professoriate.

Here are the topics and some of "how we do what we do":

The seminar meets for three hours on one afternoon a week. The first hour is devoted to *Microteaching*. Each week one student comes prepared to present a four-minute lecture on a topic of her or his choice. The presentation, along with any visual aids or demonstrations the student feels appropriate to enhance the presentation, is videorecorded in the classroom in an unobtrusive manner. The other 11 seminar participants, along with the two course coordinators and occasional faculty visitors, view the original "live" presentation, along with the immediate playback viewed also by the student presenter. Printed evaluation guidelines are used to assist in focusing on relevant aspects of teaching effectiveness of the presentation. Immediately following the videotaped playback the other participants join with the presenter in a constructive evaluation of the presentation. After this peer review the same person presents another four minutes on the same or another topic, and we repeat the process of self and peer evaluation. The entire two four-minute sessions, along with the playback and evaluative comments, takes about 50 minutes. We then break for about 10 minutes before returning to the specific scheduled topic of the week.

We have varied our microteaching procedures over the years. What we have in place at the moment seems to work best from both the students' and our own perspectives. I would add that immediate review of the videotape with the opportunity to do a "repeat performance" reveals some rather dramatic improvements that act as reinforcement for the student. We can get through all 12 students in a given semester with a few weeks left over, allowing a more in-depth coverage of certain topics. Although this certainly represents a compromise, we feel that the experience is worthwhile and should be retained as part of the seminar experience. What we hope to achieve here is both an opportunity for the seminar participants to see the value of this teaching evaluation method, and to instill in them a need to confront themselves through this technique on some periodic basis throughout their careers. Students have consistently cited the microteaching as essential to the seminar and have insisted that we continue making it available. (Note: We also make available our production studio to any graduate who might be interested in producing a professional presentation to be used as part of a curriculum vitae when in the job market.)

The two hours following microteaching each week are devoted to specific topics that over the years have emerged as meaningful areas for exploration. The first week we take up the topic of perspectives on college teaching. Since this is the first meeting, the students have not had the opportunity for a meaningful assignment. We fill the first two hours with individual introductions from each student and the two seminar coordinators. Each student also presents his or her reason(s) for wanting to be a college teacher. We relate to the group profile and talk about the diversity of the students present. Because the seminar is open to all departments on campus, we get a nice mix of disciplines ranging from agronomy to music, plus a good mixture of male/female, foreign/domestic, and masters/doctoral students. These introductions take most of the first hour, with the second hour allotted to going over the seminar syllabus and assigning students to participation groups.

For the third hour (after a second 10-minute break), we usually invite a central administrator such as the president or provost, the dean of one of the colleges or a department chair, and an undergraduate student. This provides quite a range of perspectives for discussion both during the third hour and for some time thereafter. These guests alternate each semester, of course, depending on their availability. The important element there is that we do get to hear from people at all academic levels of the university.

Session two is devoted to the topic *Characteristics of College Students Today.* Although we vary the format for this presentation, sometimes involving students from the various classes (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) our main presenter focuses on the current student survey published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education.* This, along with other timely data, provides for a lively, realistic discussion of how students change from year to year, and emphasizes the importance of teachers' keeping up with demographic trends and diversity among the subpopulations of primarily undergraduate students.

On the third week, we deal with the topic of *Psychological Principles Applied to Effective Teaching and Learning.* Jack and I present this topic and discuss our rationale and the database for what we describe as principles that have direct application in the teaching/learning process. The principles are reinforcement, stimulus variability, meaningfulness, and anxiety reduction. Here we also discuss characteristics in teachers to which students respond positively.

The fourth week's topic involves how students learn. This session is organized and run by the student group one. They use Entwistle and Hounsell's text, *How Students Learn*, as the basis for their presentation. All students in the seminar read the relevant parts of the text prior to the session. The text is no longer in print (unfortunately) but is a useful source for uncovering some of the pivotal approaches to human learning.

On the fifth week we invite a faculty person who is a recognized effective teacher (a different one each term) to lead the topic *Traditional Approaches to Teaching and Learning: Lecture and Discussion.* There are excellent selected references on this topic that students are expected to have read prior to the presentation.

As a logical follow-up topic for the sixth-week session, student group number two presents the topic *Alternative Approaches to Teaching and Learning*. The reading references on this topic cover such material as personalized system of instruction (PSI), computer assisted instruction (CAI), and many other innovative approaches that facilitate student learning. Many current and excellent references are available on this subject, as our bibliography indicates.

Also, on the sixth week of the seminar each student is required to submit three instructional objectives for a course he or she is currently teaching or plans to teach in the future. These objectives are submitted to the person who conducts the topic for session number seven, *Developing and Using Instructional Objectives*. We are fortunate to have Dr. Kenneth Klopfenstein from our mathematics department who is an expert on the topic and has been doing this for us for a number of years. He presents the topic using actual examples from the previously submitted instructional objectives and discusses their utility in teaching and testing.

Student group three deals with the topic *Evaluating Student Learning: Testing and Grading*. They typically bring to the topic examples from their own disciplines that represent both what to do and what not to do in constructing various types of examinations. We compare various grading practices, from work reference to criterion reference. The session, as do many of the others, interrelates with topics presented in other sessions.

As another logical follow-up topic, *Evaluating Faculty Teaching: Self, Peer, Student, Other* comes on the ninth week and is presented by student group four. Here the classical issues on faculty evaluation are covered, along with the "current trends" on our campus. There is never lack of currency on this topic. In preparation for this session, each student will conduct one or more class visitations to observe good teaching in action, followed by an interview with the professor, focusing on attributes of effective teaching.

A topic that has been consistently evaluated as essential for inclusion in this seminar is *Enhancing Teaching and Learning through Development and Use of Audiovisual Materials*. Again we are most fortunate to have a faculty member, Professor Eugene Decker, of our College of Forestry, who is an authority on this topic. He not only teaches how to use audiovisual materials effectively but he actually shows the students how to create their own visual aids at a minimum cost. This session is meaningful to anyone who has had to sit through a scientific paper session only to hear the esteemed speaker say, "I know you can't see this, but . . ."

At this point in the seminar we invite another recognized, highly esteemed professor to deal with the topic of *Professors as Teachers: What Makes Them Effective*. Although we invite a different person each term, they all get the same instruction: "Shed all modesty and tell us what makes you an effective teacher." Most of them have very little trouble doing this, and that is what makes the experience so memorable. They unselfishly share with our students their teaching philosophies and "tricks of the trade" they have developed over the years.

Because we feel that all those who aspire to the professoriate should have a realistic view of the variety of expectations imposed on them, we include a session on *Professors as Student Advisors* . Again we invite a member of the faculty who has distinguished himself or herself as an outstanding academic advisor. We value good advising on our campus and provide both recognition and rewards for it. Just last week, as an example, our Associate Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr. Robert Hoffert, presented this topic. Although each semester the guest professor/advisor approaches the topic from a different perspective, each provides valuable contributions to the topic. Dr. Hoffert provided a framework comparing the faculty role of advising as essentially linked to the role of teaching. His orientation provided lively discussion and opened a few eyes to how versatile faculty are expected to be today when the market for students is by no means inexhaustive.

My many years of experience in administration suggests to me that all those who aspire to the professoriate should have some introduction to the topic of what it means to be a member of what Clark Kerr refers to as "a constellation of anarchies." To deal with this, we call our thirteenth session *Professional Principles and Practices: Academic Freedom and Tenure*. Here we deal with academic freedom and tenure and other related issues of conflict resolution. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Redbook is the reference for this session, and to present the topic we invite Dr. Richard H. Peairs, former AAUP Western Regional Representative, presently a psychological consultant for Rohrer, Hibler & Replogle in San Francisco. You talk about an "eye opener"! All innocence is gone after this session. In three hours (we do not schedule microteaching this week) the students get to see the many aspects of faculty, administration, and institutional governance. Although some of these issues are difficult for students to relate to at this stage in their professional development, I would anticipate that in the long run it is perhaps one of the most meaningful topics of the seminar, should they elect to remain in academe. No punches are held here. They get some sound principles and advice, which in our opinion is of immense practical value. Many faculty who have been active for years in university teaching and research never get this kind of exposure, unless, of course, they run into irascible colleagues or tyrannical administrators.

Cognizant of the fact that most students are ultimately in the job market, we devote our fourteenth session to the topic *Obtaining a Teaching Position in a College or University*. Students are asked to prepare their curricula vitae and we offer a generic version of such a document. We survey the various sources of information on colleges and universities and present them with a series of questions they should be asking themselves vis-a-vis finding a good "marriage" between what they desire and what different institutions have to offer. We do a bit of interview role playing and give them the benefit of our interviewing experiences from both a faculty and administrative perspective. When students write back after having been out for a while, they tell us that they relate to this session more than they ever could have imagined when they were sitting in the seminar wondering if they would indeed find that "ideal" institution suited to their talents and aspirations.

The final session of the seminar is devoted to *College Professoring*, a general summary of the entire semester coupled with an extensive verbal course evaluation from each student. They are also asked to provide a written evaluation anonymously. On the basis of this session we review all that we have done in a given term and modify our future approach to the various topics accordingly. As a result of the professional openness and candor of the students, we feel we are providing a more meaningful experience each time we offer the seminar to new students. As you might expect, we have changed practically everything we have done over the years in response to reactions and suggestions right after the term as well as later feedback.

We are not operating under an illusion that in one single-semester seminar we are able to capture and teach the essence of college teaching. We realize that we are only opening up topics that have no closure. Although we certainly feel that what we are providing for interested students is of some real value, we know that at best it is a compromise. The logical follow-up, which is done in some instances, is a departmental graduate teaching experience. These specific teaching experiences in their disciplines build on our general approach to college/university teaching dealing with topics that seem to cut across discipline boundaries. For those who get both our seminar and close departmental supervision of their teaching, the prospects for success as future members of the professoriate could be enhanced. What more could we ask for our efforts?

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Frank J. Vattano is Professor of Psychology and Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. John Avens is Professor of Food Science, Colorado State University.

Helping TAs Respond to Student Writing

Christine Farris

In disciplines across the curriculum, approaches to TA training in the use of student writing differ considerably from institution to institution. On some campuses, interdisciplinary writing programs may train TAs to teach or function as peer tutors and readers in writing-intensive sections of courses in their departments. Writing across the curriculum task forces may offer workshops for TAs and faculty from all over campus. There may be some departmental training in which the course coordinator familiarizes TAs with grading procedures for the major term paper. Too many TAs inherit the attitude that "we all know a good paper when we see one, and we sure haven't seen one lately." We laugh in recognition, but too often a certain amount of academic elitism informs that attitude, and it is an attitude that, when it comes to writing, does nothing to empower either TAs or undergraduates to perform effectively.

In order to better train TAs from a variety of disciplines in the use of student writing at the University of Washington, we have established a writing component as part of our Center for Instructional Development and Research. We view writing as we do the use of lecture, discussion, and computers–as a teaching and learning tool that we can help TAs to use more effectively in their classrooms. As members of the largest research university in the northwest, experience has taught us that any TA or faculty interest given to teaching, and so too any investment in the use of student writing, must be context-driven and discipline-specific. This is frequently the rhetoric of writing across the curriculum programs and requirements, but on closer examination, one often sees on campuses generic workshops and courses taught by English departments and so-called writing across the curriculum textbooks that are simply recycled readers, the publishers of which still consider Lewis Thomas to be representative of how academic writing functions in biology and George Orwell of political science.

Our writing project is different. By functioning in a consultant capacity, either one-to-one or in department-specific workshops, we have been able to work closely with TA supervisors, course supervisors, and TAs themselves–from departments as diverse as geography, social work, and finance–in ways that begin with their voluntary, not mandated, request for help with different aspects of student writing. It is absolutely essential that any advice or materials we provide are customized to meet their needs, address their concerns at the moment, and, most important of all, acknowledge how writing is part of inquiry in their field.

My goal today is to describe to you three of the major ways through which we attempt to do just that. We try to meet discipline-specific needs by:

1. Working on the design of assignments and criteria for evaluation;

2. Helping TAs come up with "writing to learn" activities that will enhance instruction without making more work for them; and

3. Demonstrating the use of peer response groups for drafting, critiquing, and revision–a sequence that addresses both writing as evaluation *and* writing as a mode of learning.

It is our belief at the center that instructors, faculty and TAs alike, need to own their own instructional change, and we feel that way about writing in particular–not only is it necessary for instructors to own any course innovations they make that involve writing, but they also need to own more responsibility for how writing functions, a responsibility that includes more sharing with undergraduates the conventions of discourse in particular fields. Despite frequent faculty and TA complaints, freshman English instructors are not equipped to carry the ball here. Nor should they be. I am afraid I have to take issue in part with our dinner speaker Kenneth Eble's final remarks. He appeared to be lumping writing across the curriculum together with word processors and other high tech innovations that take the "art" out of writing, and presumably take writing out of English departments. If anything will allow some of us from English to get back to the "art" of writing that is connected to literature; if anything will free English department TAs, who probably teach more writing than anyone else, from feeling 100% responsible for undergraduate cultural literacy, I believe it is the idea that writing, as well as an art, *can* be a set of techniques and tools for inquiry taught by all disciplines.

One assumption underlying this mission is that there is an important relationship among student writing, student thinking, and student learning. In the process of writing, students are able to sort through ideas, integrate old and new information, and reformulate thoughts. Writing engages students in making decisions about presenting information, ideas, and arguments, in discovering patterns, and in thinking critically and analytically about a subject. The methodology, the *forms* of discourse in a field need to be modeled, but it is also in the *act* of writing that students make meaning for themselves, really learn in a course, and then communicate what they have learned to other people.

As many of you know, these purposes for writing are often overshadowed by writing as evaluation–writing to *test* more than writing to *learn*. Writing becomes a means to a limited end–a grade–rather than a means to the larger ends of thinking and learning. We obviously cannot abolish this function, and I intend to discuss it first, in fact, but I hope we can give the "writing to learn" function some time too, because in TAs we have the chance to train new instructors in uses of writing that will serve them throughout their teaching careers.

I should say that TAs are our biggest clients in the area of work on student writing, and many of them are locked into writing as assessment, as an instrument of testing, primarily because their first exposure to student writing is in their role as graders. Some TAs' first reaction is that one minute more spent on student writing above and beyond the time they are already spending reading stacks of papers or essay exams is too much. They have no intention of becoming "teachers of writing" too, in addition to everything else they are supposed to do! It is our belief that if TAs can come to view writing as a teaching tool as well as a testing tool, something that could enhance their teaching and take the place of or supplement discussion and lecture, rather than add to the elements already burdening their courses or quiz sections, that it can mean *less* time and more satisfying work.

Of course, the evaluation of essay exams and of major papers in a course are the biggest writing-related tasks most TAs have. We are managing to carry over the writing-to-learn philosophy into the work we do helping TAs and their course supervisors design writing assignments, essay exam questions, and the criteria for grading them.

We have identified a number of problems with the design for assignments and with how they are graded, especially in the large, multisection classes, that have an impact on TA effectiveness. Frequently, when a professor designs a writing assignment and expects TAs to grade it, this assignment is not in keeping with any specific course goals, at least not ones that have been discussed with TAs. Students and TAs alike frequently complain when no common criteria are developed to keep essay grading fairly consistent across quiz sections. If TAs have autonomy with their essay exams or writing assignments, they still may not be sharing criteria with students. Many of us know that a chief student complaint about TAs stems from a fear or a reality that the same assignment is being graded very very differently–and we often see an enormous range of grades that even marginal and end comments on papers cannot adequately explain.

This brings us to another source of TA and student complaints–the textual marking and commenting on student papers. If nothing else, TAs make a lot of work for themselves, as Nancy Sommers (1982) points out, by becoming "appropriators" of a student's paper, confusing the student's purpose in writing the text with their own purposes in commenting. Functioning instead as editors as if the papers were their own, TA reader/graders often fail to make clear or prioritize their concerns about student writing. Students then view their writing task as either making all requested changes or as an impossible one because of the tendency to create what Knoblauch and Brannon (1982) call an "ideal text" against which TAs measure every response to the assignment. How can we help TAs with what are still evaluation problems for all of us, make students happier, and cut down on TA work in the bargain?

One way we have found is to conduct workshops in specific departments or in a specific large course, either during orientation week or later in the quarter when requested. One focus for these workshops has been for us to bring TAs and professors together to design major writing assignments and essay exams, deciding what instructional objectives each assignment is meant to address and what intellectual tasks they would like students to go through in completing it. Let me say this again–what intellectual tasks would they like students to go through in completing it? As a product, what thinking and learning processes should it reflect?

This approach makes for very different criteria. Over the last year, I have asked a number of faculty on campus for their writing assignment criteria, and much of what I get are descriptions of product or outlines for a final format. It is easy to see why so many TAs are evaluating student writing in terms of the ideal text in the correct format. How can we introduce TAs to the idea of assigning and evaluating student writing as both a learning process *and* a product?

Don't cringe, but a possible answer is Bloom's taxonomy (1956). I have to laugh at myself, because when I first became involved with our center as the editor of the second edition of *Mentor*, our TA handbook, I took out the section of Bloom's taxonomy. And now I find it a valuable way to get TAs and professors talking about their courses in terms of their expectations for levels of thinking, student learning tasks, and the corresponding essay topics or exam questions. (See Appendix A.) The taxonomy gives us a common language–terms we can use to discuss good and bad assignments or assignments that trap students into writing at a cognitive level that is not in keeping with course objectives. It is not uncommon for TAs, especially brand new graduate students, to assume, in responding to undergraduate writing, the role of judgmental Big Sister or Brother rather than the role of initiator of the tools of inquiry in the discipline. Exacerbating this TA attitude are poor assignments, the objectives for which have not been adequately considered. Assignments may ask for high-level opinion or analysis in an introductory course and then penalize a student response that is either naive or one that is not an informational level parroting back of the lecture.

The taxonomy also gets TAs thinking about student learning as stages to move through, stages that assignments can reflect. If writing is a teaching and learning tool, then it can be all right to let students experiment with some of the tools of inquiry in the discipline–a little of Bloom's "Analysis" or "Evaluation" levels in an introductory course is all right if we do not weigh these aspects of the paper too heavily. Notice in Appendix B that TAs designing this critique of two articles assigned in an introductory geography course were primarily interested in students' abilities to find and summarize the contrasting opinions of the authors, but the weighing of their criteria permits students an opportunity to form an opinion, albeit a novice one.

When we cannot work together designing a new assignment and the criteria that the TAs would be using for evaluation, we take an old assignment that is still in use and analyze it in terms of instructional objectives and appropriate criteria. Then we take one or two student papers written on that topic, and, using the criteria the group has developed, ask them to evaluate, prioritizing their concerns and making end comments that will reflect those criteria and help students revise or write better next time. We suggest that they attach a computer printout of the criteria, leaving blanks for their comments. This method helps TAs prioritize their concerns and keeps the agreed-upon criteria in the forefront. Comments can be made text-specific by referring back to particular places in the student text where problems occur.

Students appreciate these feedback sheets and claim that they better understand not only why they got a certain grade but also what writing weaknesses need addressing in revision or in the next assignment. TAs begin responding more to the student paper as a whole and spending less time marking every line, giving the message that a dangling modifier is as big a problem as a lack of focus or failure to apply course concepts to an analysis. They also tend to make fewer eclectic editorial comments that often leave students feeling as though they are being attacked personally.

In addition to our work on designing assignments and criteria for evaluation, we have been able, in both workshops and consultation, to move into other ways that writing can enhance learning in a course. We frequently suggest the use of "entrance and exit slips"–10- to 15-minute writing exercises in class–as a follow-up to lecture or as a kick-off for discussion. Writing can be a way for both students and TAs to discover what students do and do not know in a course and if they are using their resources in meaningful ways. Shorter writing exercises like precis and abstract writing or extended definitions written in class are useful for this and are far less threatening to students than product-centered term papers. TAs can glance at some of these or all of these, perhaps only to assess understanding of concepts and terms, for instance. They can grade some of these like informational quizzes if they wish, so that major student papers can be more exploratory, allowing students a little more experimentation with the tools of inquiry in the discipline.

We have also suggested to TAs the use of Ann Berthoff's dialectical journal (1981) with the two-sided response so that students can both synthesize and respond personally to their notetaking on reading and lectures. Since TAs tend to be overworked, we also demonstrate to them via two videotapes the use of peer response groups for use in the drafting, critique, and revision process with student papers. As a collaborative learning activity, peer response groups are a solution to many TA problems with student writing. The groups decentralize some of the responsibility for reaction, criticism, and correctness from teacher to peers.

Finally, we help TAs design sequenced writing assignments that, by addressing stages in students' learning, do allow them access to a range of thinking and writing skills much earlier in their commitment to the discipline. A developmental sequence, for instance, like the one Ira Schor (1980) has adapted from Paulo Freire on the nature of jobs, moves from the concrete particulars to abstracting general aspects of work. "What do all your worst jobs have in common?" may be an early writing topic, while "What's the difference between the best and worst jobs in society?" may be a later one. Such a sequence can grow out of and stimulate discussion and serves as a model for analysis in, for instance, the social sciences–observation, generalization, abstraction. This allows TAs, through student writing, to create a context for learning and to share some of the terms of analysis in their fields with students as temporary participating members of the discipline.

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Appendix A

Example Application of Bloom's Taxonomy

Cognitive process	Process tested	Example
What students must *remember*	Recall	What is the electoral college?
What students must *restate* in other words	Comprehension	How does the electoral college work?
What information is to be *used* to solve the problem	Application	Predict what would happen if the electoral college were eliminated.
What is *broken down* into what parts	Analysis	Differentiate the various roles of the electoral college.
What two pieces of information are to be *combined*	Synthesis	How can the electoral college and the popular vote produce different results?
What students are to express an *opinion* about	Evaluation	In your opinion, should the electoral college be retained or abolished? Defend your choice.

Adapted from B.S. Bloom, et al. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: cognitive domain.* New York: David McKay Co.

Appendix B

Compare/Contrast of Two Articles Assignment

PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT: (1) To introduce you to an example of research in the discipline of geography. (2) To provide you with further reading on a topic mentioned in the course. (3) To give you an opportunity to practice succinct summarization and a bit of critical analysis.

AUDIENCE: To the best of your ability, consider your audience to be fellow scholars familiar with the field but perhaps not with these two articles. Don't strain to write beyond your knowledge-level, however. The rest of the class is (and will be) your audience.

ASSIGNMENT: Read the two assigned articles. Summarize the main points of each author. If the authors differ in their approaches/viewpoints and/or analyses, explain HOW. Which of these two articles do you find more appealing and/or convincing? WHY?

Criteria	4	3	2	1	0	*Weight*
1. Recognition of main points						30%
	(accurate)			(inaccurate)		
2. Ability to summarize						10%
	(succinct)			(too much or too little)		
3. Ability to distinguish and analyze the differences between the two approaches/viewpoints/analyses						20%
	(clear, insightful)			(vague)		
4. Ability to state a position						5%
	(clear)			(wishy-washy)		
5. Ability to support a position with information derived from the articles						15%
	(adequate, logical, refers to articles)			(inadequate, illogical, does not refer to articles)		
6. Organization						10%
	(clear)			(confusing)		
7. Readability: Language Use and Mechanics						10%
	(appropriate, correct, contributes to communication)			(inappropriate, incorrect, interferes with communication)		
						100%

Christine Farris is Staff Consultant on Writing at the Center for Instructional Development and Research, University of Washington.

Formative Feedback from Peers

Kate Brinko, John Habel, and Billiee Pendleton-Parker

Utilizing graduate teaching assistants (TAs) in the planning and implementation of a TA program is an effective and inexpensive way to start a new program or to expand a current program for TA training and development. We will describe two such programs in which instructional support is successfully provided to TAs by other TAs.

This paper will be presented in three parts. In the first part, Kate Brinko will offer an overview of the TA program at Northwestern University, then will focus on one component of that program, instructional consultation. In the second part, Billiee Pendleton-Parker will demonstrate how instructional consultation fits into a larger program for TAs, and will present a more in-depth description of a TA program, the one currently being implemented at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK). In the third part, John Habel will discuss some findings about the TAs who participate in the TA program at UTK.

The TA Program at Northwestern University

History and Structure

In 1980, the Faculty Senate of Northwestern University mandated the institution of a program of support for teaching assistants. The provost was charged with the responsibility for executing the program, with the dean of the Graduate School designated to implement and coordinate the effort. The dean of the Graduate School appoints the members of the Faculty Committee on TA Orientation and Workshops, faculty members who plan and organize activities for teaching assistants. Members of the Faculty Committee are assisted by the TA consultants. TA coordinators, faculty members appointed by the department chairs, are a resource and source of support to TAs within the departments. Although it is not an official part of the mandated hierarchy, the Center for the Teaching Professions plays a pivotal role in the training of teaching assistants at Northwestern, providing both financial support to the TA consultants–in the form of space–and professional support–in the form of expertise.

Components

The current program at Northwestern has three kinds of activities for TAs. The first kind *prepares* graduate students to perform their duties as teaching assistants. These include: (a) a language proficiency exam for international teaching assistants (ITAs); (b) a handbook for all teaching assistants; and (c) an orientation and reception, mandatory for new TAs and optional for returning TAs.

The second kind of activities provide *ongoing support* throughout the year. These include: (a) TA Coordinators in each department to coordinate training, arbitrate grievances, etc; (b) semiweekly workshops for TAs on instructional and professional issues; and (c) TA consultants who assist in the planning and implementation of all TA activities, and who provide instructional consultation and feedback.

The third kind of activities for TAs at Northwestern show *recognition and appreciation* to teaching assistants for their efforts exerted over the year. This includes a picnic at the end of the year (affectionately referred to as the "Chicken Picnic" by experienced TAs!) on the lakefront.

At Northwestern we feel that all three kinds of activities are important for TA development. But first we will examine in depth one part of this program–instructional consultation. Later we will see how this type of individualized support fits into the larger program of support for TAs.

Instructional Consultation

There are four phases in the instructional consultation process at Northwestern: (a) the initial contact with the client; (b) the initial conference with the client; (c) the gathering of information; and (d) the information review and planning session.

The initial contact with the client may be a brief phone call or a drop-in visit. During this time the consultant and client get a first impression of each other and establish the reason for consultation. Then they make an appointment to meet for the initial conference.

The initial conference usually lasts 45 to 75 minutes. During this time consultant and client establish rapport, analyze the client's teaching situation, and discuss the client's strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. This information is recorded on a standard form. Toward the end of this session, the client decides which types of information are to be collected for feedback–information from observation, from a small group discussion with students, or from a combination of the two types.

If the client is interested in knowing about his or her *observable performance* as a teacher–such as the use of hand gestures, eye contact, voice control, etc.–we will observe a class using a combination of a running log of class occurrences (see Appendix A for an example) and a structured instrument (see Appendices B and C). If the client is interested in knowing about aspects of the class that are not observable–such as clarity of explanations, difficulty of assignments, salience of goals, etc.–we will conduct a discussion with the students and report their opinions on what they like about the course, or what they think needs to be improved, and on what suggestions they have for changes. This method of gathering information is based on the Student Group Instructional Diagnostic (SGID) developed by Joe Clark at the University of Washington and has been very well received by both students and TAs at Northwestern.

After the information has been gathered, either through systematic observation or through small group discussions, we move on to the fourth phase of instructional consultation, the information review and planning session. Here consultant and client meet to discuss the gathered information and how it relates to the background information discussed during the initial conference. Alternative behaviors or strategies for change may be suggested and adopted by the client. As the session comes to a conclusion, we ask the client if his or her specific concerns have been addressed, and offer further assistance in the form of references to relevant literature and/or additional observations/discussions with students.

Summary

The TA Program at Northwestern University is still quite young and growing. However, there has been a commitment made by the faculty to address the needs of the TA. Most of the activities instituted to support TAs at Northwestern are general or group activities, such as orientation, language proficiency exams, the handbook, TA coordinators, and workshops. However, it has been recognized that individualized support–in the form of instructional consultation–is a valuable part of the process of learning how to teach. We have just examined in detail the process of instructional consultation with TAs; now we will see how that support service fits into a larger context of support services at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

The TA Program at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

There are several distinct support services for graduate teaching assistants (TAs) at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville: the TA seminar; the TA steering committee; the handbook; the newsletter; the Learning Research Center; the TA Consulting Service; and various discussion sessions, groups, and workshops. Each of these components offers valuable services to TAs; while the TA Consulting Service provides support to individuals with specific concerns, the remaining support services provide structure to the program and/or support to TAs as a group.

The TA Seminar

The TA seminar is a three-and-a-half day credit-bearing intensive seminar designed both to enhance the instructional efforts at UTK and to supplement the graduate students' professional training for academic careers. Upon arrival, each TA is given a packet of information, including information of interest to new teachers at UTK, as well as information about the campus, services available at UTK, and cultural offerings of the city. Thus, at UTK there is definitely an attempt to recognize the TA as a whole person–not only as a student or an employee.

The seminar is broken down into themes for each day: (a) UTK students and UTK; (b) strategies for instruction; (c) assessment and evaluation; and (d) setting the academic climate. Special segments throughout the seminar focus on the needs of international TAs. Time is allotted during the afternoon of the fourth day for individual conferences with members of the TA steering committee.

As a follow-up, two other whole group workshops during the autumn term are required for all TA Seminar participants.

TA Steering Committee

The TA steering committee is composed of faculty members and graduate students (including the TA consultants) involved with TAs. They serve to advise, evaluate, and review the work of the TAs, and are available for conferences with them at any time during the academic year.

Handbook

A Handbook of Resources for New Instructors at UTK from the Learning Research Center is an invaluable and very practical source of information given to all TAs and new faculty members. It has sections on the instructor as teacher/advisor, principles of teaching, and available teaching resources. It also includes an annotated bibliography and sample documents that a TA might use as a teacher (e. g., a letter regarding student misconduct, syllabi, and a take-home exam).

Newsletter

The newsletter at UTK–*The GTA at UTK: The Newsletter of the Learning Research Center and of The Graduate School*–is published three times per year. Each issue has a feature article on some basic aspect of teaching and learning, which is supplemented by shorter items, such as a column for international TAs, reviews of relevant books and articles, announcements of awards and honors, and descriptions of programs of special interest to TAs. The goal of the publication is to make a significant contribution to the professional preparation of graduate students who plan to enter academics as a career.

Learning Research Center

Since September 1965 the Learning Research Center (LRC) has been the faculty development unit at UTK. As an academic extension of the provost's office, the LRC conducts and encourages research in teaching and learning and undertakes activities designed to enhance instruction and course and curriculum development. The activities of the LRC fall into four intertwined areas:

1. Research that seeks to establish teaching and learning issues as matters of scholarly concern;
2. Consultation, workshops, and programs designed to strengthen instruction and the development of courses and curriculum;
3. Evaluation activities designed to provide data on the quality of academic programs to aid planning and review at all levels, and to furnish the faculty with information for course and instructional improvement; and
4. Support for a range of cross-college instructional efforts designed to enrich the learning environment at UTK.

Program emphases have varied over the years, but they are all designed to periodically inform the faculty and TAs of problems and issues in instruction, course development, and curriculum that cut across disciplines. In order to capitalize on the wealth of interests and talents among members of the UTK community, the LRC has consistently called on leaders and coordinators from the faculty to plan and implement seminars, workshops, and short-term research.

The TA Consulting Service

The TA Consulting Service, started in 1985, was patterned after the existing program at Northwestern University. Its purposes are: (a) to strengthen an aspect of graduate training that is often neglected–the preparation of college teachers; (b) to provide TAs with information that will help them assess their strengths and weaknesses as teachers; and (c) to help TAs function successfully both as teachers and graduate students.

The individual consultation service is confidential; information is shared only with the TA. To supplement the individual support, informal group discussions are held for TAs and faculty who have demonstrated a willingness to examine their assumptions about teaching. The service is a catalyst for creating a network of TAs from different disciplines who are united in their interest in improving their teaching.

Discussion Sessions and Workshops

The Learning Research Center, the Graduate Office, and the TA Consulting Service all sponsor special discussion sessions and workshops that deal with topics germane to TAs. These gatherings–formal and informal–have the dual purpose of increasing knowledge about teaching and learning, and of giving TAs an opportunity to create a network of colleagues throughout the university. Often prominent scholars and practitioners are asked to give a lecture or to lead a discussion.

Summary

We have just outlined the complete array of support services, including instructional consultation, available to TAs at UTK. Included in these services are the TA seminar; the TA steering committee; the handbook; the newsletter; the Learning Research Center; the TA Consulting Service; and various discussion sessions, groups, and workshops. Next we will present some findings about the TA program at UTK. First we will describe the population of TAs at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. We will then profile the approximately 40 TAs who have worked with the Consulting Service at UTK. Finally, we will set forward recommendations for the practice of instructional consultation with TAs and pose some questions for research about instructional consultation with TAs.

Findings about the TA Program at UTK

TAs at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. UTK supports large numbers of graduate students. According to most recent figures collected during the autumn quarter 1985, approximately 1,525 graduate students were supported by graduate teaching assistantships (TAs), graduate assistantships (GAs), and graduate research assistantships (RAs). Of this total, approximately 700 TAs, 480 GAs, and 210 RAs were paid through UTK; the rest were funded through the Institute of Agriculture.

About 230 graduate students from 33 departments enrolled for the autumn 1986 seminar for graduate teaching assistants. During the seminar they were asked to complete a questionnaire about their postsecondary teaching experience, their teaching aspirations, and their views about the qualities of a good teacher. Results of the questionnaire revealed that nearly one-third (30%) had between one and three years teaching experience, 14% had more than three years experience, and approximately 57% had no experience. Approximately 45% reported that they planned to teach in a postsecondary setting, 18% had no plans to teach, and 37% were undecided.

The question, "What are the qualities of a good college teacher?" elicited a wide range of responses. Most were prosaic: good teachers must possess subject matter competence, good communication skills, creativity, and enthusiasm; they must be fair, stimulating, and concerned about students' learning. More interesting were the statements of TAs about the relationship of good teaching to the research enterprise:

> A good teacher must love research.
>
> A good teacher has a basic desire to teach and demonstrates the belief that students are the 'raison d'être' of the university.

> A good teacher is one who cares about teaching itself. Too much emphasis on writing and research hurts the quality of education that students receive.
>
> The sad fact of the matter is that the best teachers I have known are those who are no longer teaching because they did not do enough research.

Other TAs called attention to the close correspondence between teachers and learners:

> A good teacher emphasizes that the culmination of learning is not a letter grade and that one's education never ends.
>
> A good teacher displays an attitude that makes if obvious that the teacher is still and always will be a student of his or her own discipline.

TAs who use the TA Consulting Service at UTK. Since autumn quarter 1985, approximately 40 TAs have sought instructional consultation. Sixteen TAs taught their courses independently, 16 were leaders of discussion sections, and 7 supervised laboratories. TAs from the College of Liberal Arts (15) were the most frequent users of this service, followed by 9 TAs from the College of Education, and 6 TAs from the College of Business.

The TA consultants made approximately 70 visits to classrooms of the 40 TAs. These visits were divided nearly equally between "exploratory dialogues"–in which students discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their course and offer suggestions for improving it–and systematic classroom observations by the TA consultants.

Ericksen (1984) reports that 94% of college teachers rate themselves above average teachers and 68% rank themselves in the top quarter in teaching performance. Most of the TAs who seek instructional consultation at UTK are not so sanguine about their teaching effectiveness. Most aspire to teach in college; most possess competence in their subjects, good communication skills, creativity, enthusiasm, and the other prosaic qualities of a good college teacher. Most of them also began their graduate studies believing that graduate school would be a good place to learn how to teach. But by the time that they seek instructional consultation, they have bumped up against the prevailing reward system that ranks teaching below research. They have spent time teaching but they have had little opportunity to view their teaching routine from a distance and to address the question of how to teach in all its complexity. They report that they receive directions from supervising professors about the teaching of a specific course, but that they rarely engage in discourse about how to teach with the best teachers on the faculty.

Most TAs come to the TA Consulting Service because they are looking for feedback about their teaching rather than for help with specific problems. Although some TAs request instructional consultation because they are experiencing a crisis with their teaching, most simply want to talk about their teaching with a critic who will give them a fair hearing. These TAs are no longer preoccupied with their doubts about the knowledge they possess; they have discovered that they have an adequate command of their subjects and that their students acknowledge their authority as experts. They are ready to direct their attention away from themselves and toward the open questions of their teaching effectiveness. Sometimes TAs are able to state their reasons for seeking instructional consultation quite clearly; they have in mind specific goals for their teaching and want to know if they are meeting them. More often, however, TAs cannot verbalize exactly what they want to know from the instructional consultation process; they raise few specific issues about their teaching because they are not consciously aware of the issues. They have had little experience thinking and talking about their teaching, and a good deal of their knowledge about teaching is tacit and intuitive.

As a rule, the TAs who come to the TA Consulting Service are competent and conscientious, and they are eager to increase their repertoire of teaching skills and to refine their existing skills. They lack, however, clear conceptualizations of their teaching.

Recommendations for practice. Given this profile of TAs who seek instructional consultation, perhaps the greatest service that instructional consultants can provide to TAs is the opportunity to engage in long, loose candid conversations about teaching. This practice would seem to be especially effective when the consultants are TAs themselves.

Recommendations for research. We have briefly outlined some of the reasons that TAs ostensibly seek instructional consultation, but little is known about the factors that influence TAs to seek consultation. In order to reach as wide a population as possible with our efforts, we need to determine the factors that motivate TAs to use an instructional consultation service.

Another area for research concerns the environment in which TAs work. More research is needed on how to sustain TAs' interest in teaching in a system that rewards research to a much larger degree than it rewards teaching. Relatedly, given this reward system, more research is needed to discern what changes can be made in graduate schools to make them better places to learn how to teach.

Reference

Ericksen, S. (1984). *The essence of good teaching: Helping students learn and remember what they learn.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Appendix A

Observation of Performance Studies B-10

9:45 I arrive, desks around perimeter of room. Desks are chairs-with-arms desks, movable. Morning sun pouring out through the windows. Room is quite bright, clean, and cheerful.

9:55 First student arrives; female; gives a big smile and says "hi." I ask if this is the poetry class; she responds, "Yes, it is." She proceeds to take off coat, pull out book, notebook, and pen from knapsack. Proceeds to read a document (rehearsing?–her lips move as she reads).

9:58 Instructor arrives; professionally dressed: sweater, skirt, heels. Speaks with me.

10:05 Instructor begins; asks all to bring chairs in circle; invites me; introduces me; reassures students that my notes are on the instructor only, not the students. Few minutes of introduction. "Who wants to go first?"

10:07 Female student (#3) volunteers immediately. Passes out her script; explains her script. Several times the instructor nods that she understands; also "um-hum" indicates understanding of what the student is saying. Student appears relaxed and confident, though "up" for what she's about to do. Other students look at her or look at her handout as she speaks.

10:10 Instructor asks question, "What's the relationship between . . .?

10:11 Student #6 arrives; no acknowledgement; she takes her seat and shares handout with student next to her.

10:14 Student #3 continues her interpretation until instructor interjects a point about "stage-right." Student #3 continues; then asks other students by name to take specific parts of the play: "__________, would you be ___________?"

10:16 Instructor: "Before you start, are there any questions that the actors have for __________?" All students make eye contact. "No? OK, then let's go." Students begin to read script immediately. All appear to be concentrating/engaged in task–smooth delivery by all; no nervous gestures. Instructor is quiet throughout, makes notes on her copy of the script.

10:21 "Very interesting scripting!" . . . "What kind of relationship did you sense?" . . . (Begins to answer own questions as student begins to answer–directs student to answer; acknowledges, then elaborates with own interpretation.)

10:24 Student #3 begins staging of her script; places actors.

10:26 "How can we use the moment to . . .?" Students pause to think: 3 seconds, then instructor, "Anyone [i.e., anyone can answer]?"

10:28 "Now look at the stage picture; is that what you want?" Student responds "Yes." More discussion of staging/scripting/delivery lines. Instructor looks at watch several times, then "Allie, we're close to being out of time."

10:30 Staged rendering of script begins. Instructor is quiet throughout.

10:32 "Yes, that was very nice." . . . "Can we clarify these relationships?" Instructor offers own staging for script: "Do you see what I'm saying, making the relationship a visual metaphor?" Student says she understands. "Very good, actors!" and instructor applauds.

10:34 Student #1 begins her introduction to her script, her interpretation. All students attentive, give her eye contact. Instructor gives steady eye contact, nods, says, "um-hum" to indicate understanding.

10:36 Student #1: "Does that make sense?" All students respond mutually "Yeah," or "uh-huh" . . . "I don't know whether to . . . or . . . ." Instructor responds, "It's up to you, __________–how do you want it?" Student proceeds to stage play; assigns roles, other students immediately respond and take positions.

10:40 Performance begins. Instructor watches; large smile on face; makes a few notes.

10:42 Performance over. Instructor: "Fun, that was real fun!" Applauds actors. Student #1 discusses her staging/feelings of actors. Instructor: "Yes, I think that works real well, too [regarding conflict between narrators]." Discussion is lively, animated, friendly; students feel free to jump in with their comments. Student #3: "What would we as an audience, as a Victorian audience, be doing?"

10:46 Instructor: "I have a couple of questions for you. First, . . ." Student #1 responds (regarding staging). Student #4 jumps in: "Oh, I have a good idea!" . . . Student #5: "I was just thinking that . . ." Instructor: "OK, yes. What do you think of this idea, director?"

10:49 Instructor: "What could you do with the pig to create pigness–do you understand what I'm saying?" Several responses from several students. Instructor responds: "Interesting–*very, very* good." Students return to their seats.

10:50 Instructor: "OK–I have a few comments to make." Gives examples of interesting ways to stage poems. Again, positive feedback to students #3 and #1 for their efforts. Uses hand gestures throughout. "I think you can feel real proud of yourselves." Comments on openness, willingness of actors.

10:53 Instructor asks for agenda for next week–who has a poem to present, etc. Student #4 to instructor: "How did your exam go yesterday?"

10:55 Instructor: "Have a good weekend! Thank you very much!" Student #2: "I think this whole course is about character-building. That's what I've been doing."

10:56 Students exit; talk among themselves, friendly, happy feeling.

Appendix B

Teaching through Discussion (University College, Northwestern University)

Results of the Systematic Observation:
Y=Yes N=No ¶=No opportunity to observe *=See attachment for example

MECHANICS

Y N 1. Group is appropriate size (<= 15).

Y N 2. Group is arranged so all can see and hear one another.

Y N 3. Instructor attends to the physical needs of the group.* (Needs observed: ______________________________)

Y N 4. Instructor usually speaks in a clear voice.

Y N 5. Instructor's verbal behaviors distract from discussion.* (Verbal behaviors observed: ______________________________)

Y N 6. Instructor usually maintains eye contact equally among students.

Y N 7. Instructor usually calls students by names.

Y N 8. Instructor's physical behaviors distract from discussion.* (Physical behaviors observed: ____________________________)

Y N 9. Instructor models good listening habits.*

PREPARATION

Y N 10. Instructor provides a common ground prior to discussion.*

Y N 11. Instructor uses specific means to assure that students come prepared.

ROLE OF TEACHER

Y N 12. Instructor states specific goals and objectives of the discussion at beginning of session.

Y N 13. Instructor states issue/topic at beginning of session.

Y N 14. Instructor uses specific means to involve students initially in the discussion.* (Method used: ____________________________)

Y N ¶ 15. Instructor paraphrases ambiguous comments for clarification.

Y N ¶ 16. Instructor repeats significant contributions for emphasis/reinforcement.

Y N 17. Instructor remains silent after some students' contributions.

Y N 18. Instructor sometimes uses nonverbal cues to direct discussion.*

Y N ¶ 19. Instructor admits not having an answer.

Y N ¶ 20. Instructor admits losing control of discussion.

Y N ¶ 21. Instructor periodically restates goals and objectives.

Y N ¶ 22. Instructor makes opportunities for all to participate.*

Y N ¶ 23. Instructor makes opportunities for quiet individuals to contribute.

Y N ¶ 24. Instructor corrects wrong statements without penalizing the contributor.

Y N ¶ 25. Instructor prevents or terminates discussion monopolies.*

Y N ¶ 26. Instructor accepts silence in the group.

Y N ¶ 27. Instructor encourages students to express differing opinions and to challenge each other.

Y N ¶ 28. Instructor mediates conflicts or differences of opinion.

Y N 29. Instructor voices own opinion later in discussion so as not to bias or dominate with own views.

Y N 30. Instructor encourages students to examine a variety of points of view before drawing conclusions or making judgments.

CONCLUSION

Y N 31. Instructor summarizes students' contributions.

Y N 32. Instructor draws together the various points made in contributions and relates them to the goal of the discussion.

Y N 33. Instructor helps students to relate discussion to concepts learned in lecture, or to new learning situations, or to students' own lives, etc.

OBSERVER'S COMMENTS:

Attachment to "Teaching through Discussion"

Examples of behaviors that may be observed:

Question #3	"Needs observed" may include: the temperature of the room; ventilation; level of lighting; level of sound; acoustics; break in long sessions, etc.
Question #5	"Behaviors observed" may include: excessive clearing of throat; "fillers" such as "um," "you know," "well, like . . .," etc.
Question #8	"Movements observed" may include: excessive pacing, fidgeting, tapping, gesturing, playing with chalk, etc.
Question #9	"Good listening habits" may include: eye contact with the speaker; not interrupting the speaker; thwarting interruptors (by interrupting them and asking the original speaker to complete thought); praising infrequent contributors when they do speak, "drawing out" reticent contributors by asking for elaborations, implications, etc.
Question #10	"Common ground" may include: pictures, slides, video film recordings, tapes, charts, flow charts, diagrams, maps; stories, personal anecdotes, current event items, assigned readings; or demonstrations, games, simulations, role playing, debates, etc.
Question #11	"Specific means to ensure that students come prepared" may include: a question about who did the reading, etc.; or may take the form of impromptu reports or summaries at the beginning of the session; or the instructor may choose to do the activity in class to ensure that all have experienced a common event.
Question #14	"Specific means to involve students initially in the discussion" may include: asking for a show of hands (i.e., pro and con regarding an issue), then asking specific students to defend/support their opinion; asking several students to paraphrase or summarize portions of the event; having students participate in an activity (i.e., simulation or role play); breaking students into subgroups of three or four (to discuss a specific issue, generate a list, identify concepts, etc.), then have them report their results; going around the table to establish opinion; etc.
Question #18	"Nonverbal cues" may include: looking, pointing, smiling, nodding, or maintaining eye contact; keeping silent.
Question #20	"Admits losing control of discussion" may include statements such as "How did we get here?" or "Our tangent has taken us too far from the major issue–let's get back to the original question," or "Although this is mildly interesting, it is not going to help you understand the topic at hand, which is _____."

Question #22 "Makes opportunities for all to participate" may include: the items from Question 14.

Question #25 "Prevents or terminates discussion monopolies" may include statements such as "We've been hearing from the same people for 10 minutes now–Mary, with whom do you agree?" *or* "This seems to have turned into a debate between Jane and Fred" *or* "Tom, you've given us several good points, but now let's hear what some others have to say."

Appendix C

Teaching through Lecture (University College, Northwestern University)

Results of the systematic observation:

Y=Yes N=No ¶=No opportunity to observe *=See attachment for example

MECHANICS

Y N 1. Instructor attends to the physical needs of the students.* (Needs observed: ______________________________)

Y N 2. Instructor usually speaks in a clear voice.

Y N 3. Instructor's verbal behaviors distract from instruction.* (Verbal behaviors observed: __________________________)

Y N 4. Instructor usually maintains eye contact equally among students.

Y N 5. Instructor usually calls students by name.

Y N 6. Instructor's physical behaviors distract from lecture.* (Physical behaviors observed: ______________________)

COMMENCEMENT

Y N 7. Instructor states specific goals and objectives at the beginning of the lecture.

Y N 8. Instructor states the issue/topic of the lecture at the beginning of the lecture.

Y N 9. Instructor provides an outline or overview of what is planned for the class session.*

Y N 10. Instructor focuses student attention before launching into the lecture.

Y N 11. Instructor relates the current topic to material learned previously.

PRESENTATION

Y N 12. Instructor varies activities over the class period.*

Y N 13. Instructor uses illustrative materials or teaching aids.*

Y N 14. Instructor sometimes pauses to allow for note taking.

Y N ¶ 15. Instructor sometimes notes and reacts to nonattending behaviors, confusion, etc.

Y N 16. Instructor periodically checks comprehension with specific questions before continuing lectures.

Y N 17. Instructor varies speech patterns.

Y N ¶ 18. Instructor admits error or not having an answer.

Y N 19. Instructor periodically calls for questions.

STRUCTURE AND CLARITY

Y N ¶ 20. Instructor follows the outline or plan for the lecture.

Y N 21. Instructor makes the organization of the materials explicit.*

Y N 22. Instructor groups subordinate ideas under major ones.

Y N 23. Instructor sometimes gives more than one example or application of a concept.

Y N 24. Instructor emphasizes important points in the lecture.*

CONCLUSION

Y N 25. Instructor summarizes major points (or asks students to do so).

Y N 26. Instructor integrates major points and establishes the relationship between them.

Y N 27. Instructor relates major points to previous learned material, or to new learning situations, or to students' own lives, etc.

Y N 28. Instructor makes opportunities for questions.

OBSERVER'S COMMENTS:

Attachment to "Teaching through Lecture"

Examples of behaviors that may be observed:

Question #1	"Needs observed" may include: the temperature of the room; ventilation; level of lighting; level of sound; acoustics; arrangement of furniture so that all can see; break in long class sessions, etc.
Question #3	"Behaviors observed" may include: excessive clearing of throat; "fillers" such as "um," "you know," "well, like . . .," etc.
Question #6	"Movements observed" may include: excessive pacing, fidgeting, tapping, gesturing, playing with chalk, etc.
Question #9	The "outline or overview" may be verbal or visual.
Question #12	"Activities" may include: lecture, audiovisual presentations, small group discussions, large group discussions, question-and-answer periods, demonstrations, games, simulations, role playing, debates, etc.
Question #13	"Illustrative materials and teaching aids" may include: pictures, chalkboard, slides, video film recordings, tapes, charts, flow-charts, diagrams or maps; personal anecdotes, or current event items.
Question #21	"The organization of the material" may be chronological, cause/effect, steps in problem solution, steps in developing a skill, etc.
Question #24	Important points may be emphasized by incidental cues (pitch of voice, gesture, or pauses); by repeating key phrases; by explicit statements (i.e., "This is important"); or by elaboration (through detail, examples, analogies, paraphrasing, etc.)

Kate Brinko is Coordinator/Consultant with the Faculty Development Program at Northwestern University. John Habel and Billiee Pendleton-Parker are Joint Coordinators with the Graduate Teaching Assistant Consulting Service at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Peer Training in a Teaching Improvement Program for TAs

Sara Latham Stelzner

One of the topics that we have heard a great deal about in this conference is the role conflict teaching assistants face; they must be students and teachers. On the one hand, they must overcome their own anxieties about being evaluated in order to allay the fears of the students for whom they will be the evaluators. On the other hand, they must not empathize too completely to be able to maintain grading standards. Usually closer in age to their students than most professors, they enjoy rapport that may be more difficult for regular faculty to achieve but they may have a harder time maintaining their authority as experts in their fields. Outside of the classroom they have the same time-management problems that beset the rest of us, but they are newer at the game and everything takes longer. Besides, deadlines for teachers and for students are not often flexible, and graduate assistants must meet both.

But teaching assistants are not the only players in an academic department who fill multiple roles. Faculty supervisors act in several capacities in situations where teaching assistants are in full or partial control of classes or laboratories. While they are advisors, counseling TAs how to do the job, they are also evaluating their performance, and may well be the deciding voice in whether or not the assistantship is renewed. Supervisors in most job settings are responsible for evaluation, of course, but in the case of faculty-TA relationships, the faculty member may be evaluating not only the TA's teaching, but his or her graduate work as well. Given this situation, a little TA paranoia is understandable. Thus, in dealing with a faculty supervisor, the TA may be anxious and defensive, less able to accept suggestions for improvement.

The conflict between the training and the evaluation functions I have been describing is a concern of teaching improvement specialists at all levels. A special report on faculty development published by *Change* magazine in 1974 speaks of the need all teachers have "to get advice about teaching, try new techniques, monitor his or her own performance, receive informed and confidential criticism, observe the work of other teachers, and discuss common problems–all without prejudice to administrative decisions about tenure or salary" (Group for Human Development in Higher Education, 1976). The peer training system we are describing today is one means of meeting the teaching assistant's need to receive such "unprejudiced" feedback–to create a situation in which they can admit doubts and concerns about their teaching to a colleague.

Employing experienced graduate student teachers to train beginning TAs does not solve all of the problems I have mentioned, but it does ease some of the tension inherent in the role conflicts on both sides of the desk. The logic is obvious: Teaching assistants understand the problems that arise from their juggling act better than anyone else, and they are actively developing strategies to cope with them. Peer trainers who are competent teachers and graduate students are role models for beginners. They are living proof that it can be done. Also, because they are neither supervisors nor dissertation directors, peers are easier to approach for advice on classroom difficulties.

Our teaching improvement efforts in the freshman composition program at the University of Massachusetts are planned and administered by a group of several teaching assistants who staff the Writing Program Resource Center. I coordinate the center's activities, as well as teach one course in the program–all part of my duties as an assistant director of the Writing Program. The teaching assistants who work with me are compensated for their Resource Center duties with a one-third reduction of the full TA load, which is three sections a year. Thus all of us are teaching one course every semester. The number of Resource Center TAs varies according to the size of the program in any given year. This semester there are four staff members and 77 graduate students teaching in the program.

The physical setting for the Resource Center is actually my office and an adjoining one where we keep a library and resource files. The program director and I choose the four or five students who work with me. The qualifications we look for are demonstrated teaching ability and interest in the training program. Staff members serve until they leave the campus or decide to do something else. Since teaching the writing course is a requirement for Resource Center staff members, graduate students who choose to teach advanced English courses or direct the undergraduate peer tutoring center, or simply quit teaching to devote more time to their graduate work are no longer eligible for the staff. Not only is it important that staff members share the TA experience with their constituency, but they should also be a visible presence in the program, available for informal exchanges with their peer colleagues.

The teaching assistant staff members work with me to plan all the training activities we undertake, from presemester workshops to the Friday paycheck coffee hour for TAs. Their most time-consuming job, once the semester begins, is videotaping first-year colleagues. In the papers that follow, Karen Strickland and Paul Puccio describe these activities in detail; my emphasis is on my role as coordinator of the teacher training program in which the bulk of the training is done by peers.

The coordinator's calendar starts with the spring semester, because that is when planning for September begins. We try to choose new Resource Center staff members early enough to be included in planning autumn workshops. I solicit suggestions from the Resource Center staff for revisions of the *Instructor's Handbook*. We survey returning teachers to compile a list of those willing to be mentors to the incoming group of new TAs.

During the summer I work with the office staff to disseminate necessary information to the appropriate groups–lists of the teaching staff indicating which are newcomers, mentor-mentee assignments, the schedule for autumn orientation, and the revised handbook.

At the beginning of the autumn semester, veteran Resource Center staff members train new staff, since we usually lose at least one person every year. We meet weekly during the first weeks of the semester to view videotapes of actual classes and discuss effective and ineffective teaching techniques. I particularly enjoy these sessions because they provide a rare opportunity to discuss teaching. We use the tapes as a basis for role play sessions in which different members of the group discuss the class with the teacher. We discuss what to look for when observing a class–organization of class time, seating arrangements, classroom interaction patterns, etc. (Appendix A). We discuss the types of questions teachers ask (Appendix B).

In addition to staff training activities, our weekly meetings provide new ideas for training sessions and activities and suggestions for the administration about improving the TA's lot. I remember one particular instance when threatened cuts in program funding caused concern among the teaching staff that they would not be reappointed. The Resource Center TAs had questions about the criteria for reappointment and felt that the director should address this concern. We drafted a memo to circulate to the staff, so at least they were assured that reappointment decisions were not capricious. The next year the Resource Center staff felt that there was a low level of paranoia and we let sleeping anxieties lie.

The resource group functions as liaison between the TA staff and the director and faculty members who supervise the teachers in the program. These faculty ("course directors," as we call them) work with groups of 8 to 10 veteran and beginning teaching assistants. It is the course directors who visit classes and evaluate the TAs for reappointment. The Resource Center staff attends one or two meetings a year with the director and these faculty members. One of our major concerns at the moment is finding ways to coordinate our training activities with the course directors' efforts.

A matter of some concern to the graduate students who work in the Resource Center is that their liaison function will be misunderstood by their colleagues. It is important that they not be viewed as leaders in a "company union," or as spies for the program administration. The staff members are very sensitive to this problem; their credibility as counselors and helpers to their peers depends on their not being involved in any way in teacher evaluation and supervision. Although the program requires a formal teacher evaluation at the end of each semester, Resource Center staff members do not have access to the evaluation, nor do they participate in personnel decisions.

One of my responsibilities is to remind the faculty that they cannot have access to information the peer trainers have as a result of working with colleagues or to the videotapes they make of other TAs' classes. Because I am a course director and do participate in hiring and reappointment decisions, I do not do videotape counseling myself. Although I wear two hats, I work hard to keep the roles of helper and supervisor separate.

One means of keeping members of our large program aware of what is going on both in the Resource Center and in the other components (main office, teaching staff, and course directors) is the monthly newsletter, edited by a teaching assistant who works with me. The Resource Center members contribute information and use the letter to announce our activities. A section called "Classnotes" includes suggestions from members of the teaching staff about class activities they have tried. Each issue includes notes from the program director, usually reporting "good news" of some recognition the program has received. Of course we announce accomplishments and publications of program personnel.

Another aspect of our training program that is managed entirely by graduate assistants is the production of training videotapes.

I think the members of the panel would agree with me that those of us who work in teacher training feel we probably learn more than those we teach. The most fruitful discussions of teaching I have had have been in Resource Center staff meetings. The truism that comes to mind when I discuss using graduate students in a teaching improvement program for TAs is no less valid because it is a cliche:

"The best teachers are those who are learning themselves." There is no substitute for the energy and enthusiasm of these beginning teachers who are trying to find ways to help their students learn. The value of their contributions, from the beginning of the Resource Center 13 years ago, cannot be underestimated. Although we cannot prove a causal connection, we like to think that our training efforts contributed to the success of the nine Writing Program teaching assistants who have received campus-wide distinguished teaching awards during the time we have been in existence. Last year two of our teachers were winners.

Reference

Group for Human Development in Higher Education. (1976). *Faculty Development in a Time of Retrenchment.* New Rochelle, NY: Change Magazine Press.

Appendix A

Class Observation-Categories

The following are categories to consider when visiting a class. They are descriptive. The appropriateness of a given type of question or response depends on the situation and the instructor's purpose.

Organization

Content: Introduces topic, previews material to be covered, relates it to past and future. Establishes set and achieves closure.

Time: Use of time consistent with goals of lesson, difficulty of material, etc. Variety of activities.

Space: Physical arrangement of classroom.

Materials

Texts, readings
Writing assignments, quizzes, exercises, games, class activities
Examples, illustrations, and applications to student experience
Use of blackboards, handouts, audiovisual aids

Discussion

Patterns of Interaction
Teacher-centered: teacher-to-student, student-to-teacher
Student-centered: student-to-student; students take initiative in raising questions and volunteering information
Small group, pairs

Types of Teacher Questions
Information: "Recitation" questions designed to test student knowledge or reinforce learning.
Application: "Can you identify?" "Reword," etc.
Evaluation: Asking for evaluation or opinion
Process: Asking for student feedback. "Should we discuss A or B first?"

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Teacher Responses to Student Answers
Positive or negative reinforcement: acceptance, approval, praise or rejection or correction
Probe: "What do you mean?" "Can you give an example?" "Is that what you meant?"
Redirect: Ask another student to comment on first answer
Restate student's answer
Answers own question

Nonverbal Behavior
Delivery skills
Response to student contributions

Appendix B

Suggested Strategies for Analyzing Questions in the Classroom

Levels of Questions

To assess the levels of questions that you most frequently ask, videotape or audiotape* one of your classes. Listen to the tape and categorize the questions you asked using Sander's Taxonomy of Questions. At the end of the tape tally up the number of questions that you asked at each level. Did most or even a disproportionate amount of questions that you asked fall into the knowledge category? Do your questions challenge students? Do your questions require students to use higher cognitive processes?

*A peer observer may be used. Observer should pose the information during the class. Follow up class with an informal session with the observer to review date and solicit feedback.

Planning Your Questions

Before class construct some questions (preferably ones that require higher levels of thinking). Planning effective questions is the start to asking effective questions. Write them down and bring them to class. Make a real effort to work these questions into your class. Reserve a few minutes at the end of the class to give the students all or several of the questions in the form of a written (nongraded) quiz. After class look over the answers to the questions. You should be able to determine by their answers if your questions have been effective.

Writing Questions

Try writing some sample questions at each cognitive level discussed by Bloom or Sanders. (1) Think of a topic from one of your courses and write seven questions, one at each cognitive level. (2) After you have done this, ask yourself what types of responses you would expect from students. (3) Compare your questions and expected responses with Bloom's and/or Sanders' Taxonomy. (4) Record your reactions. (5) Decide what you could do to improve your writing of questions at the various levels. (6) Share this exercise with a colleague and ask him or her to react to your questions, analyses, and suggestions. (7) To take it one step further try planning and asking some higher order questions in class. (8) You may then want to videotape or audiotape a class and analyze the questions you asked.

Classroom Questions vs. Test Questions

Do you ask the same types of questions in class as you do on tests? Find out! (1) Audiotape or videotape* a typical class session. (2) Review the tape and note the questions that you asked. (3) Identify the level of thinking that each question required. (4) Now, looking over several old exams, determine the level of questions posed on the exams. (5) Compare the levels of questions that you asked in the classroom with the levels of those asked on your exams. Are they similar? Do the types of classroom questions you ask prepare students for the types of exam questions you pose? If you ask a lot of knowledge questions in class yet pose questions on the tests that demand higher cognitive process, are you preparing students for the exam situation?

*A peer observer may be used.

Amount of Questions

To assess just how many questions you ask in class, videotape or audiotape* a regular class session. After class play back the tape and record the number of questions that you asked. Note the amount of class time you spend asking questions. Are you asking too many questions? Are you asking too few?

*A peer or student observer may be used.

Variations

1. While listening to the tape, record the amount of teacher-asked questions (T) and also student-asked questions (S). Determine the ratio of T/S. You will discover who has all the "airtime" in class.
2. While listening to the tape, record each teacher-asked question. Who is answering your questions? Are many questions going unanswered? Are you answering them yourself?
3. While listening to the tape, record each teacher question, the response generated, and your reaction. This will give you a good profile of *solicitation-response-reaction* question cycle.

*A peer or student observer may be used.

Convergent-Divergent Questions

Questions can be classified as convergent or divergent. Convergent questions have only one possible answer. Such questions drastically limit the field of potential answers. Conversely, divergent questions save more than one answer calling for a wide variety of responses drawn from a vast pool. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. To see which kind of question you predominantly ask, you can videotape or audiotape* a class session. Replay the tape and categorize each question as *convergent* or *divergent*. Which type of question did you use most frequently? Can you identify any difference in the class when divergent as opposed to convergent questions were asked?

*A peer or student observer may be used.

The Questioning Strategies Observation System

If you want a very critical, in-depth look at your questioning, then maybe the Questioning Strategies Observation System is for you. The QSOS was developed at the University of Texas at Austin to record verbal behaviors occurring in the classroom that are associated with the teachers' use of questions. It designates 24 categories of behavior. To pursue this avenue would require extensive observer training (at least 15 hours), but would provide an all inclusive profile of question asking. Reading, "The Questioning Strategies Observation System" by Morse and Davis first might be a good place to start if one is seriously considering this method. A modified QSOS would also, no doubt, be an adequate assessment technique.

Matching Questions with Materials (Hunkins, 1976, *Involving students in questioning*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon)

Different types of materials can trigger different levels of questions. For example, books that are very explicit have a tendency to use and foster the formation of knowledge and comprehension questions. Textbooks often fall into this category. On the other hand, primary source materials such as letters, legal documents, charts, mathematical formulas, or photographs lend themselves more readily to question-asking geared to higher cognitive levels. Even using historical novels, biographies, or the like foster the asking of higher order questions. Try organizing a class session or even a unit around primary data sources. Carefully plan your questions prior to class and then videotape or audiotape the class session. While reviewing the tape, notice your solicitation–response-reaction cycle. What level questions were you asking most often? Can you see a difference in your class's responses when you use primary data sources rather than a textbook?

Sara Latham Stelzner is Assistant Director of the University Writing Program at the University of Massachusetts.

Planning and Facilitating a Group Workshop

Karen Syvrud Strickland

TA training in the Writing Program at the University of Massachusetts has evolved into a comprehensive array of activities because of our need to prepare 20 to 30 new TAs for the responsibility of being the primary instructors in their classes. Unlike other programs, where the TA is actually an assistant to a professor, our TAs design the curriculum, teach, and evaluate their students with minimal supervision. There is no preplanned course. When they are hired, our TAs are given course guidelines that include premises about the teaching of writing and policies regarding attendance and grading that they are expected to follow, but these are the only absolutes in the program. Our philosophy of teaching writing is to use the student writing as a text, so new TAs do not even have a textbook to follow. Since TAs are left to build their own courses, there is a great deal of pressure on the training program to give them the necessary tools. As a consequence of the large size of the program, we spend most of the available formal training time with new TAs, though we also organize and encourage formal and informal training activities for experienced TAs.

Our formal training sessions consist of an orientation workshop at the beginning of the semester, regular course director meetings, and periodic workshops on selected topics. Our informal activities begin with social gatherings, orchestrated office assignments, and volunteer ongoing workshops.

One TA trainer said the hardest part of planning a workshop is finding the best time to do it. As you have been hearing at this conference, time is a precious commodity for graduate students. We have found that the preservice orientation workshop is the most influential in directing TAs' teaching. As the semester progresses and nonteaching demands increase, it becomes almost counterproductive to force training workshops on TAs. After they have already survived weeks in the classroom, they have no driving need to discover new strategies. Also, there seems to be no incentive for TAs to improve their teaching, as their main responsibility is to do well in their own graduate programs. As long as they can keep their students busy and appear to be meeting some minimum standards, there is no reason for them to devote additional time to their teaching. Our training program attempts a compromise between the program's need to have competent teachers and TAs' need to have time for their own coursework.

Attendance at the preservice orientation is stipulated in the new TA contracts. Veteran TAs are also invited, and invariably attend a few selected sessions. The concern that TAs will resist the forced meeting, a realistic concern later in the semester, is of no importance at this point. Instead, the TAs are very receptive to the material because they are worried about what they are going to teach and how they are going to teach it.

We choose to conduct a two-and-a-half-day workshop in the days immediately preceding the first day of the semester. The timing is often complained about, however. In an ideal world with unlimited resources, the workshop would be longer and held in the middle of the summer with free time interspersed throughout so participants could reflect on the information they were bombarded with and incorporate program strategies and requirements with their own experience.

We begin planning our autumn preservice workshop in the preceding spring. The resource staff and coordinator brainstorm agenda items for the in-service meeting. These include program requirements, curriculum development and implementation strategies, and student evaluation. Once we determine our general areas, we select topics. Some topics we have covered in the past include: developing writing exercises, peer editing, using student writing in the classroom and across the curriculum, responding to student papers, establishing criteria for student writing, and avoiding problems with plagiarism and academic misconduct. Along with topic selection, we invent strategies to present the information.

The primary consideration in our planning is to model behaviors that we want TAs to exhibit in their classes. For example, we discourage a lecture style of dissemination because what we teach, writing, is learned better by doing than by being given information about it. So, as much as possible, we model experiential teaching strategies. We simulate the writing class; we role play; we ask TAs to do writing exercises that we encourage them to use with their own students. The value of the modeling can be seen in TAs' evaluations of the orientation. As one wrote, "that section [a lecture session] seemed too dry. Unlike other sections, it didn't teach by modeling and so seemed less relevant, useful." Another TA wrote that a particular session "proved most valuable to me. The main reason for this is that we actually did what we expect our students to do and this is an effective way to process these aspects of the curriculum."

In addition to modeling appropriate teaching strategies for our field, the Resource Center TAs meet with new TAs over lunch without the professors and evaluative staff members present. For many TAs this session was the most popular. As one participant wrote, the brown bag lunch was the most valuable session, ". . . not because the other sessions were not valuable but because it gave me a chance to ask some specific questions that were really idiosyncratic and not worth asking in any of the large group sessions."

Total group participation is the second planning consideration. We try to tap into the resources of the group. Many of our new TAs may be new graduate students at our campus, but they are experienced teachers who can share with the first-time teachers tips on classroom management and organization. It often seems that first-time teachers are left to reinvent the wheel. Tips such as, "Decide on rules you can live with before the class starts," "stick to your rules," "keep daily records," "don't expect to cover all the material you prepared," "don't talk to the blackboard," seem obvious to people who have been teaching for any length of time, but they are commonly surprising revelations for new teachers.

After the orientation workshop, TAs receive continued support and training through the course director meetings. The course directors have a common agenda for the series of meetings, with topics ranging from how to respond to student papers to developing criteria for grading. Some time in these meetings is also spent on sharing classroom activities. One course director often shares his failures, saying he learns more from his lessons that did not work than from those that did, and he encourages his group members to share their similar experiences.

The resource center staff also contributes to the course director meetings with what we call "traveling workshops." We prepare a miniworkshop on a topic such as, "How to Handle the Paper Load and other Time-Saving Strategies," and then one or two of us present it at meetings to which we are invited. We have a variety of miniworkshops that we can present on demand.

A third planning consideration is to allow time for TAs to get to know one another. We try formally and informally to develop a mutual support system for the sharing and borrowing of ideas so that when the workshop is over TAs have found someone they can talk to about their teaching. This may seem inconsequential and obvious, but the principle grows out of the reality that graduate students often feel isolated and stranded. They can become so immersed in their lonely studies, only interacting with their undergraduate students and their own evaluating professors, that they lose perspective. Fostering informal gatherings is our way of trying to prevent this alienation.

We encourage socializing through weekly coffee hours, lunch meetings where we provide cider and cookies (good incentive to come), and a beginning-of-the-semester picnic. To facilitate greater mingling of the new people and sharing of resources and ideas, new TAs and resource center staff share one very large office together. It gets hectic when everyone has student conferences at the same time, but the informal sharing that goes on makes it worth the occasional chaos.

The informal gathering can become the best form of training workshop possible. We had one group of five TAs who met at a volunteer Saturday morning workshop presented by a professor in our department. They so enjoyed working together that they decided to continue meeting regularly on their own and together develop a theoretically consistent syllabus. I was in this group. It was a wonderful teaching and learning experience. At the end of the semester, the program director asked for a copy of our syllabus to distribute to incoming new TAs. Unfortunately, we were not able to present him with one. Each of us had manipulated the material of our meetings into a unique syllabus. What turned out to be valuable about the practice of meeting every week to talk about our teaching was the process we went through. We did not have formally structured workshops with preselected topics. Rather, in the beginning of the semester, we agreed to work toward five objectives. Then we chose units that we believed could meet those objectives. Each one of us took responsibility for designing one unit to share with everyone else. The discussions that resulted from each of us trying to verbalize what we wanted to teach and why were intense, often heated, and incredibly illuminating. We tried to reach consensus every week, but as the different syllabi reveal, we frequently did not. While we worked very hard in the beginning of the semester, meeting several times for the first few weeks, by the end of the semester we were teaching well-designed units that we felt some ownership of with very little additional preparation time.

This type of constructive peer support group is the best kind of teacher training workshop. Because there was no professor or evaluative person present, we felt able to state honestly our teaching failures and prejudices. We had a comfortable forum to rehearse our lessons and evaluate their impact. Since we were all TAs–all in the same boat so to speak–we had special insight into the personal considerations that cropped up in our discussions. We helped each other juggle what we wanted to do with what we were able to do. Coping mechanisms were mentioned to some extent at every meeting.

Thus far I have mentioned three tenets we follow in planning our training program: (a) model teaching behaviors and strategies; (b) allow for group participation; and (c) encourage people to learn from each other. The final tenet is to foster TA ownership of the course content. In our workshop planning we often feel like our way is the best and wish somehow that everyone would teach just the way we say. Sometimes we are tempted to say, "Well, let's just require that everyone do such and such." Then we have to stop and remind ourselves that part of having a strong program is giving people room to develop their own teaching styles and methods. I like being a TA at the University of Massachusetts because by not handing me a syllabus and forcing me to adapt to his way, the program director implicitly says he respects my intelligence and trusts my ability. This of course puts more pressure on me than if he had handed me a canned course, but it is a much more satisfying experience because the course I create is mine. When planning our workshops we have to remember that other TAs feel the same way about creating their own courses.

Thus, in planning and facilitating group workshops our key words are model, encourage, share, support, and, above all, respect.

Karen Syvrud Strickland is a Teaching Assistant and Resource Center Staff member of the University Writing Program at the University of Massachusetts.

TAs Help TAs: Peer Counseling and Mentoring

Paul Puccio

In the University of Massachusetts Writing Program, experienced teaching assistants meet individually with new teachers, both formally and informally, to discuss their difficulties and successes. New TAS are usually uneasy about admitting to the many problems and questions they have, especially to their faculty advisors and program administrators; they are, however, more likely to feel comfortable with other graduate students who, they can assume, have recently encountered and may still encounter the same problems. I am sure that we all agree on the value of such peer counseling, but insuring truly helpful counseling is not easy. A university department or program must eventually face the difficulty of instituting both widespread and effective counseling. In order to offer new TAs available and trained counselors, our Writing Program depends on the trained staff of graduate students who work in our Resource Center and, to a lesser degree, on the other experienced TAs.

If the four Resource Center staff members were the only recognized mentors in the program, their jobs would be impossible; answering questions and giving advice and visiting classes, they would have little time for their own teaching and studying. For this reason, we have implemented a mentor system, pairing each new TA with an experienced TA. It works this way: At the close of a school year, the Resource Center coordinator sends a memo to all TAs who have taught in the program for at least one year, asking them if they would agree to be mentors the following year. This insures against our drafting unwilling or uninterested TAs. Each one who responds affirmatively is assigned a new teacher at the start of the next school year. Some Resource Center staff choose to be mentors, but others decide not to because of their own work demands. Usually, mentors and mentees exchange phone numbers, attend each other's classes, and meet whenever the mentee has questions or difficulties. Although it is best for the mentor to initiate this relationship, he or she ought to allow the mentee to determine the frequency of their meetings. An occasional, "How is your class going" demonstrates interest, but too-frequent questions and attentions might be perceived by the mentee to be suggestions of his or her incompetence. It is reassuring to the new TA, however, to know that another graduate student, experienced both as student and as teacher, would willingly offer help, advice, time, and a sympathetic ear.

Although there is no formal training for mentors, they are encouraged to speak with the Resource Center coordinator and staff, as well as with more experienced mentors if they have questions about their role as counselor. Due to time and financial constraints, mentoring remains a loosely structured volunteer system, and we must depend on the mentor's good sense and sensitivity in meeting with new TAs. Because many mentors have taught only one or two years in the program, they easily remember their own first year on the job and treat their mentees as they appreciated being treated themselves.

At the end of the school year, a follow-up questionnaire is sent to all who participated in the mentor system; it asks both mentor and mentee to evaluate the usefulness of the system and to suggest improvements. We invite evaluation of all the activities and services we offer. Not only do responses help us make better subsequent plans, but signed responses frequently indicate TAs who are particularly interested in teacher training and are, therefore, likely candidates for the Resource Center staff.

This staff provides both support and resources, such as files of successful assignment sequences and challenging in-class activities, knowledge of our many training videotapes, and the experience of teachers who have been at this job for several years. The most formal peer counseling strategy in which the Resource Center staff play a major role is the videotaping of new TAs. This is how it works: The staff member and TA agree on a mutually convenient time for taping, and the TA completes a short questionnaire that asks for a description of what is planned for the class, what the teacher's goals are, and what teaching skill he or she would like to study through watching the tape. Some TAs focus on the organization of their lectures, others on the clarity of their assignments, and many focus on their direction of class discussions. The counselor then tapes the class and hands the tape over to the TA, who watches it alone, free to observe himself or herself on the TV screen, perhaps for the first time. *This is no easy viewing.* Most of us are uncomfortable watching ourselves, suddenly forced to see the person whom others see. Few TAs concentrate on their teaching skills during the first moments of this first viewing. Initial responses usually sound like: "I am *so* fat," or, "Do I always flail my arms about like that?" My own reaction to my first videotape was, "Never again will I wear those trousers in public." After the TA recovers from this shock, he or she is likely to view parts of the tape a second time and jot down some observations or questions.

The counselor also views the tape alone, so as to take notes about particular sections. I always place the counter number beside my comments, so I may easily locate the pertinent part of the the tape. Once counselor and TA have viewed the tape separately, they meet to watch it (or parts of it) together and discuss the class. These peer counselors have learned the value of letting the TA talk as much as possible during these discussions, and it is probably best that the counselor allows the TA to make those observations of clothing, posture, and mannerisms before gently focusing the conversation on the teaching skill indicated on the questionnaire.

It is far too easy to point to ineffective teaching techniques, and a sensitive counselor knows that it is much more helpful to allow a new TA to discover his or her *own* weaknesses. It can be frustrating to the more experienced teacher not to label quickly and clearly the problems in a taped class, but such a diagnostic approach may intimidate the TA and damage the trust on which the counseling relationship is based. Moreover, the teacher will learn more about his or her problems if allowed to talk freely about them. Merely labeling a weakness does not help the TA understand it any better, nor does it encourage the TA to "think out loud" about *why* he or she acts in this way. When I was first videotaped, my counselor showed me two or three separate parts of the taped class without commenting on them; it did not take me very long to see the pattern of my class behavior. Because I detected it myself, I could identify its roots in my way of thinking and could begin considering ways of improving–all without resenting the counselor for *criticism* of my teaching.

A counselor may also approach this discussion by referring to the TA's responses on the questionnaire, calling attention to the teaching skill there singled out; for instance, "You mentioned on your questionnaire that you wanted to focus on the clarity of your assignments. Do you think that the taped assignment was any different from others this semester?" This sort of question directs the TA to explore the nature of his or her teaching, perhaps leading to valuable conversation that goes beyond reference to the particular taped class. Occasionally, a counselor recognizes that the truly helpful discussion will not refer to the tape, though it was from viewing the tape that the discussion sprang. Although a counselor may have prepared detailed notes, he or she cannot anticipate the posttaping discussion; rather, the TA should feel comfortable in knowing that the counselor will listen and will help with whatever the TA thinks is important. We often encourage TAs to be taped twice, either to look at changes in the particular teaching skill they had just studied or to focus on another skill. Repeated tapings and discussions reinforce the bond between TA and counselor, building trust and usually resulting in conversations that deal more frankly with problems.

Our role as counselor does not always come naturally, and part of the Resource Center staff training is learning the most effective counseling behaviors. The very term, *peer counselor*, reveals the paradox inherent in our position. We are equal to the other TAs (with the same job title, same salary, same student status), yet we are qualified to counsel because of our experience as teachers, our interest in instructional development, and our training as counselors. A brief description of our training for videotape counseling shows the behaviors and attitudes that we think are essential for this job. More than just learning to use the video equipment, our training focuses on the communication skills necessary for helpful posttaping discussions. Before any of our staff tape new TAs, they tape one another, view the tapes, and discuss them as we would with a new teacher. The staff coordinator and the other staff members watch this posttaping interview and, afterwards, comment on the counseling. One Resource Center staff member stressed the importance of the counselor/teacher's positive self image when she wrote: "We cannot be credible to others unless we believe we are good teachers and are committed to, and believe in, the videotape procedure as a way of improving teaching skills." We also judge if the counselor is evaluating, rather than describing, the taped class and not allowing the teacher to evaluate his or her own behavior. Descriptive observation encourages the TA to do the work–to discover his or her *own* problems, without feeling defensive about a counselor pointing a finger at mistakes or ineffective techniques. For example, rather than tell a teacher that he or she introduces an assignment in a disorganized, incomplete, and unclear fashion, a counselor might say, "I notice that your students have a lot of questions about your assignment." This is likely to initiate a discussion of the teacher's method of presenting the assignment, and the teacher, not the counselor, would be considering the number and nature of those student questions and how they might be anticipated in the assignment itself.

To be effective, videotape counseling *must* be nonthreatening; during our model tape discussions, we are careful to note counseling that is too critical or too directive for new TAs. Had the counselor in the last example said to the TA, "You present your assignment in a confused, incomplete, and vague manner," that TA probably would not have said another word during the discussion; he or she would never have looked more closely at the students' questions or discussed ways to improve assignment presentation. The teacher would have felt inadequate and would have been embarrassed at having the inadequacy exposed to a peer. Rather than encourage self-observation, self-evaluation, and self-improvement, the counselor would have alienated the TA and prevented any discussion. Instead of helping the teacher, the counselor would have been implying that the teacher is beyond help.

We understand that TAs naturally feel vulnerable when others visit their classes, therefore we stress that this videotaping and discussion are free from evaluation; faculty advisors and program administrators cannot see the tapes without the TAs' permission, and Resource Center staff will not discuss the tape or posttaping interviews with them. Our memo to new TAs, in which we describe videotape counseling, emphasizes our respect for their classroom privacy; it says, "The taping is for your use only. No one sees the tape except you and members of the resource staff, unless you give written consent for its use in training or evaluation." We want new teachers to see that the value of videotaping is that it gives them a chance to see their class from another perspective and discuss the class with a peer who will not criticize or report what he or she sees to anyone else. For this reason, we discourage TAs from planning special classes for the camera; our intention is to tape classes that demonstrate the teacher's *natural* strengths and weaknesses.

In many ways, the relationship between peer counselor and TA is similar to that between teacher and student in our Writing Program: both counselor and teacher note strengths *and* weaknesses and focus on only a few major problems, making concrete and specific comments that assure that improvement is not only possible but highly probable. Both avoid direct criticism whenever a descriptive observation can point to a problem and allow the other to recognize it. Just as the writing teacher should respect the ideas of the student, helping the student with his or her own paper, the counselor should respect the TA's ideas, helping with the class or assignment that the TA is doing and not with one that the counselor would do or has done. In our Writing Program, in which TAs plan and teach their own classes, counselors must encourage TAs to create and develop their own curricula, rather than imitate or borrow the work of more experienced teachers. In a nutshell, the writing teacher's success is revealed in the increasing independence of his or her students, and the counselor's success is revealed in the increasing independence of new TAs.

There are, of course, much less formal ways in which these experienced TAs counsel new TAs, and these informal meetings continue long after a teacher's first or second semester. The four members of the Resource Center staff share office space with new TAs, frequently talking with them, meeting with them over lunch, maintaining a sometimes-daily contact with them. New teachers see us preparing our classes, having conferences with our students, struggling to balance our responsibilities as students and as teachers–doing all the same things they do. Until this school year, the TAs in the Resource Center shared a small office, separate from other TAs, though conveniently close to the program administrative offices. This insured our meeting frequently with our staff coordinator and gave us proximity to the Resource Center library, but it also resulted in many TAs perceiving us as program spies–intermediaries who would report to the director any ineffective teaching or dissatisfied teachers, thereby making us partially responsible for job reappointments. Sensitive to this misperception of our job, we explicitly assured new TAs during our preservice workshop that we are there to help and that we are TAs just as they are. That the four Resource Center staff members share an office with 15 new TAs helps to prove our point. We believe that our position is better understood now by the other teachers in the program, so we can more openly and confidently discuss our shared difficulties in teaching, and we can establish the trust and honesty that are necessary for truly helpful counseling.

The success of a peer-training program, such as ours at the University of Massachusetts, depends on the commitment and interest of teachers who are generous with their time, their creativity, their experience, and their energy.

Planning workshops, organizing social events, videotaping and counseling new teachers, Resource Center staff members try to do all they can to make being a TA a rewarding, educational, enjoyable, and feasible enterprise.

Paul Puccio is Teaching Assistant and Resource Center Staff Member of the University Writing Program at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Advantages of a Course Manual for Multisection Courses Taught by TAs

Anita Gandolfo

The supervisor of multisection courses taught by TAs faces a variety of challenges in the training and supervision of these instructors. Many TA supervisors are responsible for supervising more instructors than the chairs of most academic departments, and the instructors they oversee need more support in meeting the demands of college teaching than most other university faculty. This supervisor is ultimately responsible not only for the TAs but also for the education of the many undergraduate students that these TAs are assigned to teach. A course manual is a valuable instrument for meeting many of these challenges.

My own experience as a TA supervisor is not anomalous. I know that many of the problems I face that led me to develop our current course manual are relevant for other TA supervisors regardless of their disciplines, the number of TAs they supervise, or the size of their student bodies. So, although this presentation of the benefits of a course manual for the TA supervisor is based primarily on my own experience, I think other professionals with similar supervisory roles will find it applicable to their situations.

As freshman writing supervisor at West Virginia University I regularly oversee the teaching of 25 to 30 graduate teaching assistants. Since most of our TAs are in our two-year masters program, about half of my TAs are new each year, and most of the others have only a single year of experience. Yet these very inexperienced instructors are responsible for developing the writing skills of approximately 2,400 freshmen each year. My task is two-fold: to develop a cohesive program of writing instruction for freshmen, and to provide training and support for the TAs who must teach that program. A course manual is an invaluable aid, both for the instruction of the undergraduates and for the professional development of TAs as teachers of writing.

The initial advantage of a course manual is in specifying all course policies and procedures so that both students and instructors are operating under the same set of assumptions. Both the students and the instructors in the course I supervise are usually relatively new to the university, so it is important to have such issues as the university policy on plagiarism, the course attendance policy, and the grading criteria clearly spelled out for them. From experience I have found that "when in doubt, include it." That is, people who have worked in an institution for a number of years often take policies and procedures for granted, but the undergraduates and TAs need the details carefully delineated. Preparing a course manual that will include all policies and procedures relevant to a particular course or program challenges the supervisor to fully articulate all information, a thoroughness often lacking in transmitting such information orally at informal orientation sessions or piecemeal throughout the semester.

This systematic presentation of relevant course policies, while helpful to both undergraduate students and TAs, has hidden advantages for the supervisor, as I have discovered from experience. When confronted by students who are challenging or appealing their TAs' class policies or grading practices (and *all* TA supervisors must regularly face such confrontations), the course manual usually provides sufficient basis for resolving the conflict. It also helps establish a positive atmosphere for the discussion, as the reference to the text helps students understand that the administrative decision is neither arbitrary nor capricious. In addition to serving as a basis for resolving most student complaints about the course, the manual's listing of all policies and procedures indirectly helps in the supervision of individual sections. Occasionally, TAs deviate from the course policies and establish their own. This practically always comes to my attention through my classroom observation, our weekly group meetings, informal conversation, or student complaints. Having the accepted policies clearly spelled out in the course manual helps to rectify such situations from the professional perspective of our mutual responsibility for presenting the course as originally outlined to the students, rather than from the unfortunate perspective that often prevails in such situations–"I want you to do it my way."

Another way in which a course manual can be helpful is in providing an outline of the course schedule and the assignments involved. This obviously serves to standardize the course. It not only gives the undergraduate an overview of the work involved, but it also specifies constraints within which the TA must operate. For example, our policy is to require six essays during the semester in English 1, so one TA cannot require 10 essays from his or her students, while another asks for only three. This not only ensures that students enrolled in many different sections are required to do similar work, but, more importantly, the manual's course outline guides the TA in teaching the course according to the principles established by the supervisor, a professional whose expertise and experience have contributed to the development of the program. The course outline, then, serves to ensure consistency among sections while providing TAs with a pedagogically sound foundation upon which to build their individual class sessions.

A valuable asset in a course manual is that it provides the opportunity for instruction in basics of the discipline that the TA may be unable to articulate adequately. Writing, for example, is a very complex cognitive activity, and it is possible to be a fluent writer yet not be experienced in teaching someone else how to write. Such fine writers often enroll in graduate programs in English and become TAs (who almost invariably teach freshman composition). But these writers only learn to teach writing successfully after bringing to consciousness the basic writing process they internalized long ago. The course manual can help bridge the gap between TAs' own writing ability and their ability to teach writing. Careful explanation in the course manual of some of the basic steps in the writing process (e.g., how to find a topic, how to write a thesis statement, how to develop a plan, etc.) provides this primary information to all the students whether or not an individual TA presents the material clearly. At the same time, this type of information in the course manual provides a model for the TAs in their efforts to learn to teach writing effectively.

Teaching inexperienced instructors to teach writing effectively is one of my greatest challenges, and the course manual is helpful in this area. Currently we have one week of orientation prior to the beginning of the school year, and most of our new TAs have only recently received their bachelor's degree and have never before faced a class. There is a temptation to try to do too much (because so much needs to be done!), so that the new instructors often become bewildered by pedagogical theories and new ideas in the discipline rather than firmly grounded in the specifics involved in the course they are to present in a few days. The supervisor must realize that the course may be the best one ever developed but it is the supervisor's course alone until it has been fully appropriated by the other instructors involved. If the course manual is used as the focal point of the TA orientation, preparation is always course-specific, always directed to the TAs' understanding of the course and personal integration of its policies, procedures, and pedagogy.

Obviously, developing a course manual is not a complete solution to providing cohesion in a multisection course taught by TAs, but the manual is a valuable adjunct to the supervisor's efforts to provide a common experience for the undergraduates and assist TAs in their teaching responsibilities. A final advantage in these perilous times of budget restrictions is that most custom publishers pay royalties on course manuals, so in addition to all the academic benefits derived from the manual, there can be financial rewards as well for the department or program. While a course manual is no panacea and does not relieve the TA supervisor of the responsibility for direct contact with TAs, its benefits are certainly worth the time and energy invested in its development.

Anita Gandolfo is Associate Professor of English and Freshman Writing Supervisor at West Virginia University.

Integrating Supervision, Evaluation, and Training: Graduate Student Internships in Teaching Composition

Darwin L. Hayes

As part of their general education, all students at Brigham Young University must complete seven semester-credit hours of English composition: four in freshman English and three in advanced writing. Students register for the advanced writing course in their junior year, after completing freshman English and after considerable knowledge or experience in the major. Available are five courses designed for the particular needs of students in various major disciplines or colleges.

1. English 312, Critical and Interpretative Writing, an advanced composition course in exposition and persuasion for students in the fine arts and languages.
2. English 313, Critical Writing for Elementary Education Majors, an advanced composition course assisting students in their college writing and in the teaching of writing.
3. English 314, Writing about Literature, literature-based exposition and research for majors in English and other languages or literatures.
4. English 315, Factual and Scientific Writing, an advanced composition course for students in business and the social sciences.
5. English 316, Technical Writing, an advanced composition course for students in biological, engineering, and physical sciences.

The 60 full-time faculty in the department of English are not a sufficient number to teach the 75-80 freshman English sections, 45-50 advanced writing sections, and the 120 sections of literature, English language, and creative writing each semester. Consequently, the department employs 20 part-time faculty and approximately 50 student instructors (TAs) (mostly graduate students in English, but also a limited number of graduate students from the School of Law or other disciplines). Student instructors have full responsibility for classes they teach, though they undergo a rather extensive training program with the director and associate director of composition: a three-day workshop prior to the start of the school year, a weekly seminar, supervised classroom visits, and consultation. Of the total composition program, student instructors teach 52% (mostly freshman English); part-time faculty teach 23%; and full-time faculty teach 25% (90% of the advanced writing).

When the "vertical program" began in 1970, the department intended (and the university administration agreed) that only experienced faculty would teach the advanced courses. Staffing English 312 and 314 posed no difficulties; faculty who had been teaching freshman English shifted to the advanced courses and the department expanded its number of graduate student instructors. But staffing English 315 and 316 could have been difficult if the department had not benefited from the natural growth its elective technical writing course had undergone between 1962 and 1970. That course had grown from a single section taught by John S. Harris to five or six sections each semester taught by full-time faculty in the department who had learned to teach technical writing under Professor Harris. (See Harris, 1984).

As Harris had invited interested teachers to sit in as he taught the course and then to teach a class on their own, in the same way others could become familiar with principles and practices needed for the new 315 and an expanded 316 program. Training teachers by internship began. Our first interns were faculty. They would sit in on the class taught by an experienced professor and then teach a class on their own, or we would assign two faculty to team-teach a single class of 40-50 students, the experienced teacher taking the lead and acting as coach. Eventually we accepted part-time faculty, having them sit in on the class one semester, suggesting they write the papers and do the work the students did, and then team-teaching with them the following semester before they taught on their own. The program evolved gradually, and now we accept a limited number of second- or third-year graduate students.

The sequence now is rather consistent among the five advanced courses. The person (faculty, part-time faculty, or graduate student) who desires to intern, for instance, in factual and scientific or in technical writing, registers for the course or sits in on the class as if registered. We strongly recommend that prospective interns do the work of the course. In addition, the person begins reading in the rhetoric of the particular course and in the journals and publications of the various disciplines for whom the course is designed. The teacher ought to be more than superficially conversant with subjects students will write on. And the person officially applies to become an intern.

When accepted, the person will intern with an experienced and proven effective professor. They will have a class of 40-45 students. Together, they plan, write the syllabus for, and teach the course. Generally they divide the work evenly (instruction, assignments, conferencing with students, evaluating student performance), with the professor as leader.

Early in the semester the two will counsel together three times weekly: the professor will instruct the intern in the content and rationale of the course; together they will plan what to teach, who will teach it, and how to teach it. The professor assists the intern in anticipating student questions and problems inherent in concepts or skills and may suggest resources for further study of those concepts. These meetings are sessions in which the two examine all things necessary for effective teaching of the course (stance, concepts, objectives, instruction, interaction, assignments, evaluation of student work, the dynamics of professorship and of scholarship, etc.). Regularly, the two work through a few student papers together to achieve some uniformity of marking and grading. Together they conference with students (two on one) as training for one-on-one conferencing. They share teaching files and materials freely and develop new materials as needed.

The two regularly interact in the classroom, though each will have primary responsibility for some portion of each day's presentation. And both teachers, of course, compute final grades.

Just as there is ongoing training, so there is ongoing supervision and evaluation. The intern receives praise for activities or instruction that has gone well and assistance for improvement as needed. The doing of things together and doing things on one's own allow each to observe, to clarify, to examine any and all aspects of instruction. In addition, the intern learns ways of seeking information for improvement of performance. At the end of the first four weeks, for instance, they may ask the students to list on a half sheet of paper three or four things that are working well and three or four things that need improving. Since the comments are to remain anonymous, students are encouraged to be open, even frank, but helpful to both teachers. Such a simple step toward formative evaluation threatens no one, and if repeated again at eight weeks and perhaps again at twelve, summative evaluations required by the director of composition of all student instructors at the end of each semester are taken in stride and even anticipated with confidence. And it is not always the intern who gains from the association; the professor must always be in top form.

After interning successfully, the person solos the following semester with a class of 20-25 students. The professor remains available for consultation, and may visit the intern's class when invited or at unannounced intervals.

The internship serves several purposes: first, the training of good teachers (for us, primarily of writing, though certainly TAs could intern in other disciplines); second, supplying a cadre of experienced teachers to staff classes somewhat inexpensively; third, broadening the training of graduate students while assisting them financially; fourth, building or maintaining somewhat uniform and sound instruction in multiple-section courses; fifth, expanding the graduate's opportunities for employment. And sixth, such mentoring promotes good collegiality.

Reference

Harris, J. S. (1984). Training teachers of technical writing by internships. In *Teaching technical writing: The training of teachers of technical writing.* Moorhead, KY: Association of Teachers of Technical Writing Anthology #4.

Darwin L. Hayes is Associate Chair of the English Department at Brigham Young University.

The Student Instructor Program at Brigham Young University

Sally Taylor

Overview

The teaching assistant (called student instructor) at Brigham Young University plays a vital role in the composition program by providing teaching services. In return, the TA receives valuable experience in teaching and classroom management. TAs teach over 75% of our freshman English composition classes each semester. Between 75 and 90 sections of freshman English classes at 25 students per class are carried each of our two semesters. Spring and summer terms carry between 8 and 12 sections. We currently have about 50 TAs employed in the composition program, about 20 of whom are first-year instructors.

In autumn and winter semesters, two or three sections are honors sections and five or six are experimental sections. Four of the experimental sections are under a master teacher who combines the four sections one day per week; four TAs work with the divided sections two days per week. The other experimental sections have focused readings and writing assignments. One section deals with women's issues and one with religious principles and Mormon literature. This latter experimental section is held evenings twice weekly in one of the dormitories.

Recruitment

Students entering the English graduate program at Brigham Young are encouraged to be TAs to broaden their experience at the university. However, not all students who apply are accepted into the student instructorship program. In addition, graduate students from related disciplines are encouraged to apply for student instructorships in freshman English. Limitations are set by the student's qualifications and by the number of classes available. The criteria for selecting TAs are grade point average, previous teaching experience, English background, and personal aptitude. Letters of recommendation and interviews help point out the most qualified applicants. Of the approximately 100 English graduate students, about half are TAs.

Preparation

TAs are required to attend a preschool conference each fall. New instructors go through a two-day orientation that covers procedures, policies, teaching techniques, supplementary assistance, and other items. Returning instructors come to a portion of the preschool conference to get updated information.

Throughout the school year, attendance at our weekly instructor's meeting (WIM) is required. Sessions at WIM contain workshop and teaching-related activities. Guest speakers and specialists are invited to discuss various topics and to give supplemental assistance to the TAs. (This year's WIM schedule is described in Appendix A.)

New instructors are required to register for a one-hour class called Methods of Teaching College English (English 642R). It focuses on the philosophy of teaching and gives practical teaching methods suggestions for new instructors throughout the first semester they teach.

Stipends

Current stipends (1986-87) for the four-hour freshman English day class are $2,107 for the first-year TAs and $2,040 for the second-year TAs. Night classes pay $1,400 per class. Advanced composition classes pay $1,530 per class, since the advanced composition classes are all three-hour classes. First-year TAs teach one class only, but senior instructors may teach two classes if they wish and if the classes are available.

Rights

Student instructors are given graduate student parking privileges, access to duplicating and audiovisual equipment, resource files of teaching materials, desk copies of their textbooks, access to supplementary reading and writing texts and resource books, typewriters, access to computers, access to secretarial help, and individual mailboxes. TAs are also given office and study space (although they must share it with other instructors). The shared office space contains telephones, filing cabinets, desks, a refrigerator, and a microwave oven.

Responsibilities

TAs are expected to abide by the standards and rules of the university. They must dress and act in a professional manner to maintain the respect of the students in their classes. TAs are expected to meet their classes regularly, grade and return papers promptly, be conservative in the use of handouts or equipment, and prepare a syllabus for their class or use the department-prepared syllabus. New instructors are required to use the departmental syllabus for their first year. All TAs are expected to attend WIM.

Auxiliary Assistance

Individualized tutorial assistance is available in a Reading and Writing Center for TAs to utilize both for themselves and for students who have special reading or writing problems. Three satellite reading and writing centers are also available in the dormitories, one each in the three major dormitory areas. Tutors and full-time personnel from the Reading and Writing Center also give a series of miniclasses on topics such as speed reading, mapping and previewing skills, capture techniques, figurative language, drawing correct inferences, tone, reasoning, and preparation on the two novels assigned for the freshman English classes. In addition, computer use is available in conjunction with the Reading and Writing Center. Some computer use is available for TAs free of charge. Rental computers are also available in the library for instructors and students.

Supervision

The director and assistant director of composition work with the TAs in the methods class and in WIM. Additionally, the director and assistant director visit the TAs' classes at least twice each semester and have an evaluation conference with each TA each semester. TAs also have an interview with the chair and the assistant chair of the English department. Corrective interviews by the composition director are also held if needed.

Evaluation

During the visits to the TAs' classes, the director and assistant director make note of teaching methods and classroom management. These items are discussed with the TAs during the interviews. The evaluation is included in the TAs' files. They are also encouraged to engage in peer review.

Internships

One of the most exciting opportunities available to TAs is the internship program in advanced composition. Three or four advanced composition teaching internships are available each semester to graduate students. This is a three-pronged program. The first semester the TA either takes for credit or sits in on an upper-division composition class. The second semester TA team-teaches the advanced composition course with a full-time faculty mentor. The third semester the TA teaches the advanced composition course with peripheral assistance from the mentor. The TA may sign up for cooperative education credit for the semester he or she team-teaches and/or, with permission of the mentor, sign up for credit in extra readings in the literature and the philosophy of the course. Currently, the most utilized advanced composition course for internships is technical writing.

Other Items

Social activities for the TAs are held in conjunction with the Graduate Student Association. Special guest speakers, socials, and other events are scheduled by the elected officers and the graduate faculty advisor. The president of the English Graduate Student Association is a member of the Composition Council of the English department.

Appendix A

Fall Programs for the Weekly Instructors' Meeting (WIM)

Sept. 9	**Computer Grading**–Introduction to a records-keeping program called "Electronic Class Roll" written by Dallan Quass and presented by Dallan Quass and Gene Priday, the Assistant Registrar of the university. Each TA was given software and an instructional manual after the presentation.
Sept. 16	**Psychological Problems in the Classroom**–An open question-and-answer discussion of the severe stress-related problems TAs may encounter in the classroom. Given by Eugene Buckner, a psychologist in counseling.
Sept. 23	**Workshops**–Four groups of 12 under a discussion leader met to discuss classroom management.

Sept. 30	**Logic**–James Faulkner of the philosophy department discussed the difference between Aristotelian logic and Stoic logic and their applications in the classroom.
Oct. 7	***Pride and Prejudice* discussion**–Introduction to this year's novel by Lorna Best, a specialist in Austen.
Oct. 14	**Workshops**–The four groups discussed problems with grading student papers.
Oct. 21	**IBM Demonstration & Grading program**–IBM equipment was demonstrated by Jackie Mah, an IBM representative, and Elray Pederson, the computer specialist in the department, demonstrated his computer grading program.
Oct. 28	**Workshops**–Group discussions on conferences and classroom work groups.
Nov. 4	**Internship Program**–The coordinators of the four advanced composition courses and the senior editor of the Publications Center discussed the internships available to graduate students.
Nov. 11	**Workshops**–Discussions on critical reading and audience evaluation.
Nov. 18	***The Ox-Bow Incident* Discussion**–The Reading and Writing Center tutors discussed the approach to the novel they will be using in the miniclass series.
Nov. 25	**Workshops**–Hands-on workshop for holistic grading.
Dec. 2	**Evaluation**–Experimental sections report and general first semester evaluation of freshman English.

Sally T. Taylor is Director of Composition at Brigham Young University.

Policies for Graduate Assistants in the English Graduate Program at Youngstown State University

James Henke

General Information

The Graduate School requires assistants to spend 20 hours per week on assigned duties. A graduate assistant in English will typically spend two quarters in the Writing Center, will teach one section of freshman composition for each of four quarters, and will attend all required meetings relative to those duties. Beginning with the second quarter of teaching, the assistant will be assigned five hours of additional duties, such as: (a) assisting with department projects; (b) assisting faculty members with research; (c) assisting faculty members in teaching (other than freshman composition); (d) conducting personal research. Depending on department needs and students' interests and abilities, exceptions may be made to provide graduate assistants with additional experience in any of the above areas or in writing and editing.

The Writing Center

Hours

Thirteen hours a week are scheduled for tutoring activities, including individual appointments, giving workshops, and assisting with English 520 labs. These hours are set at the start of the quarter and remain fixed at times chosen by the graduate assistant in consultation with the coordinator of the center so as to ensure that the center is adequately staffed during its busiest hours. Five hours a week are scheduled for training, preparation, record-keeping, and review of materials. These hours may change from week to week depending on the graduate assistant's personal schedule and the need for scheduled meetings and conferences. Two hours a week are not scheduled in the center so that there is some free time for professional/personal use each week.

Duties

During their first quarter in the Writing Center, graduate assistants will spend the first week observing tutoring sessions conducted by experienced staff, participating in training activities organized by the coordinator, and generally familiarizing themselves with the center's materials and procedures; observation of some composition classes will also be a part of the training. Later in the quarter they will observe some 50-minute workshops offered by the center and may be asked to make a repeat presentation of a workshop they have observed.

Second-quarter graduate assistants (or experienced teachers in their first quarter) spend at least 3 of their 13 hours a week assisting an English 520 instructor with the lab. In this capacity graduate assistants are encouraged to work closely with the course instructor and in fact are regularly in the classroom or the lab with the instructor. The instructor will submit a written evaluation of the graduate assistant's work to the assistant, with copies to the coordinator of the center, the coordinator of graduate studies, and the coordinator of composition. The instructor and the graduate assistant share the planning and the supervision of the lab study programs for the class group of 15 students. During their second quarter, assistants may also be asked to develop a workshop under the supervision of the Writing Center coordinator.

All graduate assistants are expected to share in the responsibility for overall Writing Center staff and program development by active participation in staff meetings. As the only staff members who are reimbursed for reading and planning time, graduate assistants are expected to read suggested chapters and articles and report on their applications to the Writing Center staff.

All tutors in the Writing Center, including graduate assistants, are expected to follow procedures outlined in the *Writing Center Handbook* with regard to student records, response to faculty referrals, progress reports for the Office of Developmental Education, and weekly and end-of-quarter reports. Tutors in the center are not permitted to edit composition students' papers or to discuss faculty members' teaching or grading procedures with their students.

Supervision

The Writing Center coordinator supervises graduate assistants in the center by informally observing tutoring sessions throughout the quarter, periodically checking students' lab folders to assure that careful diagnoses are being made and appropriate records of progress kept, and observing workshop presentations when possible. One or more tutoring sessions are formally observed: the coordinator observes and writes a description of the tutoring session, concluding with an overall statement about strengths and suggested improvement. One copy of the observation report is given to the graduate assistant, and one is kept by the coordinator.

At least once each quarter the graduate assistant is asked to select several student folders and bring them to a conference with the coordinator. For each folder, the graduate assistant explains the diagnosed problem and the teaching approach used with the student.

Graduate assistants who are assigned to assist with English 520 labs are evaluated by the instructor for their knowledge of Writing Center materials and general helpfulness with the class (see *Duties*).

All tutors, including graduate assistants, are evaluated autumn and winter quarters by students being tutored in the center. All tutors are informally evaluated every quarter by referring faculty in the department.

On the basis of observations and faculty and student evaluations, a summary report of the graduate assistant's work in the Writing Center is sent by the center coordinator to the graduate coordinator, with a copy to the graduate assistant. This is usually done at the end of each quarter the graduate assistant works in the center.

Training

The quality of training provided for graduate assistants assigned to the Writing Center depends, in large part, on the level of interest in teaching expressed by the graduate assistant. Much training is informal: lectures and other formal presentations are provided at the beginning of the quarter; after that assistants are encouraged to read specific articles and to bring examples of student papers that are difficult to assess for discussion in staff workshops. Assistants are urged to keep journals about their tutoring, to raise specific researchable questions about the teaching/learning of composition, to discuss interesting student cases with other staff members, and to attend the spring Writing Centers Association conference.

Opportunities for broadening experience beyond tutoring are available to assistants interested in working on the *Composition Newsletter* or developing workshops in writing with faculty from other disciplines.

In all activities, guidance is available from the Writing Center coordinator and experienced tutors and faculty working in the center.

Teaching Composition

Hours

The graduate assistant teaching for the first time will average 15 hours per week in activities directly related to teaching (e.g., preparation and class meetings). In addition, at least one hour per week will be allotted for office time, one hour for mentor/assistant meetings, and three hours for professional study/extra preparation. When a graduate assistant teaches for the second time and is assigned the same course, presumably fewer hours will be required for class preparation, so the assistant will be assigned up to five hours of additional duties. If the graduate assistant is assigned a different course to teach–because of either the assistant's request or the department's extraordinary staffing needs (in which case the assistant is consulted)–no additional duties will be assigned.

Duties

Graduate assistants are the instructors of record during the quarter they teach and have full responsibility for the teaching of the section of basic composition assigned. This responsibility includes developing the course syllabus, planning assignments, responding to student work, evaluating student progress, and assigning final grades for the students.

Supervision

During the quarter before graduate assistants begin teaching, they meet with the coordinator of basic composition to review general department policies; the coordinator will also assign the section of the course to be taught. Also, during the quarter prior to teaching, the graduate assistant must consult with his or her mentor who will have been assigned by the coordinator of graduate studies and the coordinator of basic composition as approved by the department chair. Consultation should include such activities as visiting classes of the mentor, discussing with the mentor the texts to be used, and compiling class strategies and assignments.

During the quarter of teaching, the graduate assistant and the mentor meet periodically to review the progress of the teaching experience, to go over marked papers together, and to discuss any problems that may have arisen. The mentor will visit at least two classes of the assistant and will invite the assistant to visit his or her class in session.

Evaluation of the graduate assistant is done by the mentor, who at the end of the quarter writes an evaluation of the teaching, copies of which are given to the graduate assistant and the coordinator of graduate studies. In addition, any student evaluations of the section are reviewed by the mentor and the graduate assistant, as well as by the coordinator of basic composition and the department chair. Assistants may request that the graduate coordinator place such evaluations in their files.

Training

Training for teaching occurs in various ways--by consultation with the mentor and the coordinator of basic composition, by classroom visitation, by attendance at mentor-assistant meetings, by informal discussion with faculty, and by enrollment in English 907. Graduate assistants are also expected to attend meetings of composition faculty and to participate in any activities of the composition faculty (such as group grading projects or scoring English placement tests).

Graduate assistants are also encouraged to read journals and books relating to composition, available at the library and from the coordinator of composition. Assistants are encouraged to share ideas, problems, and solutions with other members of the English department through submission of items for the *Composition Newsletter* or for the "Teaching Ideas" file in continuous compilation by the department. Graduate assistants should take advantage of any workshops or colloquia that pertain to the teaching of composition. One new required practicum is described in Appendix A.

Appendix A: Practicum in the Teaching of Composition

This is a description of a practicum in the teaching of composition to be required of all first-year graduate assistants in the English department. The practicum will be divided into three parts to be given autumn, winter, and spring quarters each year. Students will not receive graduate credit. The work is a part of their assistantship duties.

Part One will focus on a review of grammar, practice in identifying grammatical errors in student writing, and a discussion of strategies for explaining grammatical errors to students in terms they can understand. The students will meet one hour a week during autumn quarter.

Part Two will focus on a close review of the 550 composition texts, the development of assignments for 550, and the composition of a syllabus and lesson plans for 550. It will also provide students with an opportunity to observe experienced faculty in the classroom and to discuss their observations. The students will meet one hour a week during winter quarter.

Part Three, spring quarter, when the graduate assistants will be teaching the first time, will provide a forum for the graduate assistants to discuss among themselves and with the instructor what kinds of activities do and do not work for them in the classroom and to consider alternative approaches to the same problems. Activities will include the observation of each others' classes, observation of the graduate assistant's classes by the instructor, analyses of teaching performance and teaching strategies, critiques of assignments, workshops on assessing students' performances on particular assignments and on evaluating a student's overall performance in the course, and discussion of particular problems in dealing with students. Students will meet two hours a week.

The instructor will provide written evaluations each quarter with copies to the students and the department chair and graduate coordinator.

Rationale

Graduate assistants often feel they need very specific kinds of quite detailed guidance in order to teach effectively the first time. We think the practicum will provide the kind of detailed and practical help our graduate assistants need.

The practicum is intended as a supplement to, not a substitute for, the mentor program and the training the graduate students receive in the Writing Center.

In the Writing Center, our graduate assistants are trained in techniques of tutoring and are introduced to the materials useful in tutoring. However, we have noted that graduate assistants sometimes have some difficulty identifying specific kinds of sentence structure errors in student papers and many of them have difficulty explaining those errors in terms students can understand. The first quarter of the practicum would provide the graduate assistants with help in developing those skills.

Mentors would be assigned to graduate assistants the quarters they teach in the second year. Frankly, we think that the kind of detailed and weekly, if not daily, help our graduate assistants often need during their first quarter of teaching is too much to ask of those who are willing to serve as mentors. Once the graduate assistants have been through the practicum, mentors can concentrate on developing and fine-tuning the graduate assistants' teaching skills.

The practicum will not be a repetition of or overlap with English 907, The Teaching of Writing. English 907 is a course designed to be of use to both secondary and college level teachers. Its focus is on theories of composition and research in composition. The purpose of the practicum is to develop the specific knowledge, skills, and materials necessary for the graduate assistants to teach a specific course (550) effectively.

And there are real advantages to the graduate assistant. Most graduate assistants are insecure and anxious the first time they have to face a class. The winter practicum should alleviate the anxiety to a certain extent because it will allow the graduate assistants an opportunity to prepare the course thoroughly in advance, and the spring practicum will provide a weekly forum for them to discuss their anxieties and insecurities. Since those who teach the practicum will receive a reduced load equivalent to teaching a four-hour course for their work, they will be able to assume the obligation of being available to discuss particular problems with individual graduate assistants at times convenient for both.

Although the practicum will not be a part of the student's transcript, it will provide the kind of detailed information about a graduate assistant's teaching that will enable the department chair, the graduate coordinator or the coordinator of composition to write genuinely effective, detailed letters of recommendation.

Finally, the practicum will, hopefully, create a real professional camaraderie among the members of each class of graduate assistants.

James Henke is Professor of English at Youngstown State University.

A Three-Phase Approach to TA Training: The Program for Associate Instructors in French at Indiana University

Cathy R. Pons

The department of French and Italian at Indiana University employs approximately 50 teaching assistants (called Associate Instructors) each year to assist in the teaching of lower-division French courses. Of that number, roughly half are new to our teaching program. These new instructors are for the most part degree candidates in French literature or linguistics, but the group includes as well several exchange students who are native speakers of French. Most are beginning their graduate studies and have no prior experience in teaching. In structuring a year-long training program for new instructors, therefore, both short- and long-term goals are considered.

An early goal of training is to instill confidence and develop an esprit de corps among neophyte instructors by providing extensive formative feedback and by encouraging group work. Since TAs have complete responsibility for the teaching and testing of their sections, a further goal is to maintain high quality instruction in these courses by giving instructors specific guidelines for classroom activities and testing and grading procedures. These same guidelines ease the task of class preparation for TAs so that more time is available to devote to their graduate studies. Lastly, given that the majority of TAs are degree candidates, a training program should prepare them for eventual entry into the teaching profession.

The program that trains TAs in French proceeds in three phases: an orientation workshop, a practicum combined with faculty supervision, and a course in methods of college French teaching. Each of these components is outlined below, along with a discussion of future directions for the program.

The Orientation Workshop

The workshop takes place during the two weeks that precede the beginning of autumn semester. Supported through the budget of the department of French and Italian, the program provides funding for three faculty members as well as stipends for the TA participants. Several experienced TAs are involved in the workshop as well, making presentations and conducting demonstrations. All sessions are open to visitors, and faculty and returning TAs are encouraged to attend. In terms of content, the workshop is designed to provide TAs with a "survival kit" with which to begin the semester; thus discussions focus on organization of the class period, effective teaching techniques, departmental and university policies, student-teacher relations, etc.

Several features of the workshop program are innovative; these features are described in detail below.

Built-in Review

Daily assignments during the workshop permit TAs to review concepts and techniques introduced, beginning with a small-group discussion period at the end of the day during which participants develop and compare ideas for that night's assignment. The next day begins with a review/discussion session during which a few participants present their materials for the group's comments, and any remaining questions are treated. All assignments are turned in to staff members, who review each and comment further in writing to the individual TA, thereby verifying general understanding of important points as well as individuals' relative strengths and weaknesses. Through this procedure, crucial topics are treated in five phases: (a) initial presentation, (b) group discussion, (c) individual assignments, (d) follow-up presentations/discussion; and (e) comments on each TA's work.

Videotapes

Videotapes produced by the department of French and Italian in cooperation with IU's Radio and Television Services show actual first-year French classes taught by TAs with only one year of teaching experience in our program–thus representing attainable goals for novice instructors. These sample classes illustrate many of the techniques TAs will use during the first weeks of teaching and, since camera angles include students as well as instructors, the tapes are valuable in illustrating typical student behaviors and teacher reactions.

The Student's Perspective

During two sessions of learning Haitian Creole, TAs are reminded (or perhaps learn for the first time) what it is like to be a student in a beginning language class–since the structure of Haitian Creole is very different from that of French, TAs experience the same confusion, tension, and excitement their own students will feel. A follow-up session provides TAs with an opportunity to discuss their feelings and reactions to the learning situation, and to reflect on what their students' feelings and reactions might be.

Microteaching

All activities of the first week of the workshop build toward microteaching, during which TAs work in pairs to plan a lesson, then present their lesson to an actual class of students recruited during the summer from those who have registered for first semester French in the autumn semester. The approximately 80 students who enroll in the two-day, noncredit "Headstart in French" (microteaching) program are representative of the actual groups TAs will teach: Some are anxious and apprehensive about language study; others are bright and want to "get ahead" of their classmates. The microteaching program offers the students an opportunity to experience the materials, techniques, and teachers with whom they will learn French in the autumn.

New TAs not only teach a lesson during microteaching, they also have the opportunity to watch classes from an observation booth, their observations guided by a questionnaire that must be completed and returned to the TAs who taught that particular session.

Following each group's lesson, the TAs who taught meet with a staff member to discuss their performance and their peers' comments. In their evaluations of the workshop, new TAs consistently rank microteaching as the most useful component and a fitting culmination to the two-week program.

The Practicum with Faculty Supervision

Once the autumn semester has begun, TAs take part in a one-hour per week practicum consisting of a series of five guided observations, carried out in three steps: (a) A preview prepares TAs for observing one particular aspect of a class; (b) a questionnaire is completed by the TA during or after the observation; (c) a follow-up meeting allows TAs to discuss what they saw with the demonstration teacher. For example, for an observation of error correction techniques, the preview would involve discussion to establish a hierarchy for the correction of errors and to identify a number of possible techniques. During the observation, TAs would complete a form to identify all student errors and the correction strategy used by the teacher in each case. Following the visit, each TA would reflect on the appropriateness of the correction techniques used, as a basis for the follow-up discussion. This series of focused observations affords new TAs the opportunity to see several other teachers and to talk with them about classroom techniques. Feedback from new instructors indicates that they find these continued observations extremely useful and that the focus on practical aspects of teaching during the first semester is entirely appropriate.

Faculty Visits

Each TA is visited by the course supervisor during the second month of teaching. This visit is announced in advance, and instructors are provided with guidelines concerning areas for observation: class organization, methodology, professionalism and rapport with students, use of French, and classroom management. A checklist used during the actual visit mirrors these guidelines and is used as a reference point during the follow-up session, which takes place on the same day as the classroom visit. During this session the TA is encouraged to identify personal strengths and areas in need of improvement, and strategies for improving teaching are outlined. The visit and discussion are summarized and documented with a memo from the supervisor to the TA. Subsequent visits are scheduled at the supervisor's discretion, at the request of the TA, or whenever the instructor is assigned to a new course.

In addition to faculty visits, an experienced TA may work with a staff member of the Teaching Resources Center (TRC), a center supporting faculty and TAs in the College of Arts and Sciences. The TRC staff will observe the class in conjunction with videotaping, then will view and discuss the tape with the TA.

Materials Preparation

During the first three weeks of the semester, detailed daily lesson plans are prepared and distributed to TAs by their course supervisor, reinforcing concepts and techniques introduced during the workshop by allowing new instructors to focus on *execution* rather than planning. By the fourth week, these lesson plans are being prepared by teams of new TAs, who review their plans with the supervisor before distributing copies to all course instructors. TAs have found this experience valuable for more than one reason: Those who prepared lesson plans for their peers found themselves forced to look carefully at their organization and how clearly they explained classroom procedures, and they appreciated the extensive feedback on the plans, which they received from the course supervisor. For those who received the lesson plans each week, a great deal of planning was already completed, and each person benefited from the ideas of many others.

Tests administered in first-year courses are prepared by teams of TAs. For each test, committee members submit a copy of the rough draft to every course instructor, who must look over the test and return the draft, with or without comments, within two days. The committee uses these comments, along with those of the supervisor, to make revisions before submitting the final draft for duplication. Again, this process reduces the amount of work involved for any one TA in test preparation, while allowing everyone the opportunity to have input into what is tested and how it is tested. Those who prepare tests receive extensive feedback from peers and supervisors.

The Methods Course

With the perspective of a semester's teaching behind them, TAs are ready to go beyond the "what" and "how" of effective teaching and reflect on the "why"–that is, the theoretical concerns and professional issues in foreign language teaching. The three-hour course on problems and methods of college French teaching is a requirement for all degree candidates in French literature and French linguistics. In addition to providing an overview of approaches to foreign language teaching and the theoretical notions underlying current trends, the course aims to further help instructors develop techniques for effective teaching and testing, and to train instructors to evaluate teaching performance and materials. Readings for the course are drawn from a variety of sources, including professional journals.

The first assignment in the course requires TAs to familiarize themselves with professional journals in the field of foreign language teaching and encourages them to develop the habit of creating a summary card for each article they read. After reading articles from several journals and written summaries, TAs must address themselves to questions that will help them determine which of the many available journals will be most useful to them in their own teaching development.

Additional assignments include applications of more nontraditional methods to their own teaching and preparation of classroom materials. TAs are also asked to evaluate materials for computer-assisted language instruction and, as a small group task, to evaluate a textbook. Finally, TAs work in peer observation groups of three persons, based on a model described by Barnett (1983) to develop skills in providing formative feedback on teaching performance.

Having completed the methods course, TAs are encouraged to take additional related courses in applied French linguistics, second language acquisition, language testing, and computer-assisted language instruction, to name some of the available offerings.

Future Directions

Currently, training in our program is focused on first-year TAs but it is clear that experienced instructors need and want further training. Our TAs have expressed a desire for more opportunities to observe a variety of classes, for more and varied types of feedback on their own teaching, and, as they gain experience, for opportunities to work more independently and to have further input into course design. Some ideas on how additional training might be provided are discussed below.

Additional Peer Observations

A number of instructors in our program have found the peer observation system an effective way of gaining additional insights into their own teaching and the teaching of others in a nonthreatening and cooperative atmosphere. These TAs value the skills they have developed in providing formative feedback to colleagues. The peer observation groups work best using self-selected members, and can easily be implemented among interested TAs.

Seminar on Teaching

Such a course is now being developed in our program, to be called "Topics in French Methods." With a different focus from year to year, the course might treat, for example, the teaching of literature or of civilization; alternatively, such a course might deal with an issue such as proficiency based instruction.

Mentoring

Senior TAs who have outstanding pedagogical skills and who are effective in providing feedback can gain experience in teacher training by being paired with junior colleagues. The senior TA, while functioning as a role model and advisor to the new instructor, does so in a nonthreatening way.

By the same token, senior TAs may wish to work under a particular faculty member willing to take on the role of mentor during a specified semester. For example, a TA interested in the teaching of civilization might work with a faculty member who is developing a new course in that area. The two would meet to discuss course objectives, and the TA would have some input into the design of the course syllabus, choice of texts and other teaching materials, and test design. The TA might also guest lecture in the course.

Reference

Bennett, M. A. (1983). Peer observation and analysis: Improving teaching and training TAs. *ADFL Bulletin, 15*, 30-33.

Cathy R. Pons is Supervisor of Associate Instructor Training at Indiana University.

Mathematics Roundtable Session

Lynda Morton, Phil Huneke, Sia Wong, and Joseph Fiedler

Twenty participants from 18 universities discussed screening and training programs as well as concerns of teaching assistants in their mathematics departments. In an interaction format, highlights from the current programs at The Ohio State University and the University of Missouri-Columbia were presented. This discussion developed into an exchange of ideas for problems facing mathematics departments using TAs. A few of these concerns, together with some of the responses, are listed below:

The number of TAs in my department is small enough that hiring a trainer cannot be justified.

Responses:

1. Use experienced TAs to help train the new TAs (put in same office to promote interaction).
2. Use specialists from other areas of your university to lead teaching seminars.
3. Join other departments for training.
4. Ask interested faculty to become mentors.

Is there a way to increase the supply of graduate students in mathematics and lessen the need for TAs whose field is not mathematics?

Responses:

1. Offer programs with dual subjects, i.e., math/computer science, math/statistics, math/economics, math/physics.
2. Offer to pay fees and tuition along with TA stipend for mathematics graduate students.

What screening procedures have been used successfully?

Responses:

1. Presentation of microteaching session by both American and international TAs (ITAs).
2. SPEAK test and Test of Spoken English for international TAs.
3. Recommendations from people who have spoken with the applicant.

My time is spread too thin–I teach courses, coordinate courses, and train TAs.

Response:

Perhaps written material could relieve some of the time constraints.

Are all other universities experiencing our problem of student absence from class? What can be done?

Responses:

1. A seminar on motivating students would be well advised for TAs.
2. Weekly quizzes or turned-in homework requires attendance (there were mixed emotions about this suggestion).

Highlights from Presented Programs

Details for each program can be obtained from the presenters listed at the beginning of this report.

Ohio State University (used effectively for the past five years)

Nonfaculty mathematics personnel.

1. Undergraduate TAs (mostly senior math/math education/engineering);
2. Graduate or professional from another academic department, not math;
3. Part-time lecturer from community (hired per quarter);
4. Full-time student in master's program; and
5. Master's/PhD student in department of mathematics.

There are four levels of TA stipend for graduate TAs and seven levels of TA stipend for other personnel classifications. Contracts are usually awarded for three quarters; summer contracts are awarded for some TAs.

Courses taught by nonfaculty teaching staff. Undergraduate service courses, from remedial to a business calculus sequence, an engineering calculus sequence, and postcalculus or exotica courses are taught by the nonfaculty teaching staff. All but the remedial course are offered in lecturer/recitation format during the school year; summer courses are taught as individual classes. Courses are matched to the skills of the different personnel groups.

Screening and training. Screening and training are handled differently for the different personnel groups. Master teachers (sometimes TAs, sometimes faculty) act as trainers and evaluators for applicants. Mathematical training through differential equations is required, as well as presentations attended by the master teacher. Of special note is the Headstart Summer Program, encouraged for all new TAs. A one-quarter fellowship is offered in the summer for new TAs and an eight-week teacher training program is required. For United States TAs the training focuses on skills necessary for the business calculus sequence; ITAs are trained for teaching the engineering calculus sequence. At the end of the eight-week program, ITAs are judged for suitability to teach. If they are judged to be unsuitable because of problems with their English or teaching they are given grading jobs at the reduced TA stipend rate until they are judged to be suitable.

Summer courses require full teaching responsibility of the TA, so booklets on how to teach the specific courses (detailed syllabi, suggested assignments, models of exams) are provided.

Evaluation and continuation. Each year in March recitation leaders and graders are evaluated by the lecturer. Teachers of unsupervised classes are required to collect student teaching evaluations. Along with this permanent documentation, reactions and impressions are collected from faculty, the undergraduate counseling office, the program associate, the vice chair and the chair.

University of Missouri-Columbia (used effectively for the past seven years)

On an average, 71 teaching assistants per year–38% new, 30% international, and 50% mathematics majors–are employed to teach or lead recitation classes for undergraduate mathematics classes through differential equations. Screening and training are required of all TAs new to the department, regardless of previous teaching experience. Transcripts, resumés, recommendations, and presentation of a microlesson are used to screen candidates. The training procedure includes:

Orientation. The two-day orientation consists of:

1. Informational manual–available in DOS or Script file;
2. Administrative concerns–welcome, introductions, expectations of TAs, responsibilities and benefits of TAs;
3. Teaching concerns–ethics, immediate decisions, what students are like, acculturation, classroom management, presentation skills, communication skills, testing and grading, and questions from TA panel;
4. 10-minute presentations–with five TAs and the training and development coordinator; and
5. Course-specific meetings–led by course coordinators.

Classroom observations. Each TA is visited in the classroom by the training and development coordinator at least once per year (at least twice for each new TA). Additional observations are made by request or to verify a student complaint.

Weekly teaching skills seminar. New TAs are required to attend weekly teaching skills seminars; experienced TAs are invited. The seminars include lesson plans, composing a test, teaching problem solving, discussing grades with students, discussion-leading skills, reinforcement, classroom problem situations, discussion of videotapes of other TAs, observation exchange, tips for finals week, guest speakers, math topics, and excellence in teaching.

Individual counseling with teaching assistants.

1. By training and development coordinator–student complaints/problems, teaching complaints/problems, teaching techniques, and departmental information.
2. By course coordinator–questions about grading procedures, departmental exams, and syllabus.
3. By associate chair–course assignment, rehiring, and administrative and academic concerns.

Evaluations. Evaluations are documented for the permanent files of TAs by the training and development coordinator, the course coordinator, and students. Student evaluations at midsemester are not required but are encouraged for new TAs.

Lynda Morton is Training and Development Coordinator of the Mathematics Department at the University of Missouri; Phil Huneke is Vice Chairman, Sia Wong is Associate Professor, and Joseph Fiedler is a PhD candidate in the Mathematics Department at The Ohio State University.

Chemistry Roundtable Discussion

John Bauman and Wendy Walton-Sonntag

Fifteen participants from 12 universities discussed training programs, chemical safety, and other concerns from chemistry departments at the chemistry roundtable. Summaries of principal topics are listed below.

International Teaching Assistants

It was agreed that a minimum score of 230 on the TSE and 550 on the TOEFL was necessary for a TA in a typical chemistry teaching assignment. Specifics of orientation and training programs for the ITA were discussed. A campus-wide cultural orientation program was considered to be best. Chemistry departments were also advised to use campus resources for remedial English instruction. Some institutions even recommend contracting with another school to teach English.

Once the ITA is employed, departments provide incentives for improvement by increasing stipends as language exams are passed. Often an undergraduate TA may be used along with an ITA to handle teaching duties. If student complaints still arise, free transfers to other sections should be allowed.

Safety in Instructional Laboratories

Wendy Walton-Sonntag described the safety program at Ohio State University. All TAs go through a one-week orientation program before classes begin. Safety instruction plays a major role. It is especially important to familiarize ITAs with safety legislation, practices, and enforcement. Exact procedures for chemical waste disposal are clarified.

At OSU each undergraduate student is supplied with safety goggles and gets a 50% penalty on a lab grade for removing the goggles during a lab. Students sign sheets to certify that they have received instruction in safety. The signatures are kept for three years. All lab stations are equipped with individual hoods.

Summer School for TAs

Stanley Marcus described an extensive program at Cornell University for training TAs. The program is currently supported by summer session budgets as well as university funds. It was initiated by an Exxon grant seven years ago. Twenty to thirty TAs are brought in each summer for a four-week session. They assist in summer school courses and practice-teach topics from typical graduate exams for their microteaching experience. They still go through a regular orientation for new TAs at the start of the semester.

Orientation and Training for New TAs

John Bauman described a two-day program offered in the department of chemistry at the University of Missouri-Columbia for 12 to 15 entering TAs. This program has been offered for the past 10 years and consists of 5 parts:

1. Introduction to teaching. References are made to the available literature concerning the art of teaching and the nature of problem solving. Data are provided on the backgrounds, goals, success rate, and other characteristics of typical Missouri students. A discussion based on the ACS *Handbook for Teaching Assistants* completes this segment.

2. Project TEACH videotapes–Several of the tapes are shown and discussed. The introductory tape and those on reinforcement, tutoring, microteaching, and safety are especially useful.

3. Videotaping of participants' microteaching–Each TA selects a topic for a five-minute presentation. This is reviewed and analyzed by the whole group of TAs.

4. Lab teaching–Much time is spent on laboratory safety, check-in procedure, and practice experiments from the actual lab.

5. Organization meeting–Departmental and campus resources for TAs are described. Assignments to specific courses, along with the issuance of appropriate desk copies of textbooks, syllabus, registration list, and keys, completes the program.

Follow-up is provided through weekly meetings in each course using TAs, visits by the lecturer to the labs and discussion sections, and finally, the use of written teaching evaluations from each TA's students. Effective TAs are rewarded with merit stipend increases.

John Bauman is Professor of Chemistry at the University of Missouri. Wendy Walton-Sonntag is Coordinator of Chemical Safety at The Ohio State University.

5. International Teaching Assistants

Introduction

Because their language and relative unfamiliarity with American culture often present unique difficulties in the classroom, international teaching assistants (ITAs) have come under close scrutiny across the nation. Complaints about ITAs by students and their families have generated investigations and initiatives at all levels, from individual departments to state legislatures. The focus on ITAs has in some sense been unfortunate, reinforcing stereotypes and encouraging quick fixes to complex problems. On the other hand, the attention accorded to ITAs has produced useful consequences, such as the allocation of resources for more careful screening and preparation programs for the ITAs, and a more serious general concern for the preparation of teaching assistants, both native-speaking and international. This section groups together papers that address three central issues concerning ITAs: the general nature and magnitude of the problems that exist, programs for ITA pedagogical preparation, and language competency screening tests.

The Nature of the Problem

Approaches to ITA development have been hampered by a general lack of adequate data, which contributes to false assumptions and myths that surround the ITA issue. Several papers in this section present findings that are intriguing, given these common assumptions. John Lalande and Gerhard Strasser, for example, in their survey of ITAs in foreign language departments, found that most ITAs were not totally new to this country or to teaching. They found that most had either traveled or studied in the United States before coming to teach, that most had considerable previous teaching experience, and that most had come to this country to travel or visit in the period immediately preceding their teaching responsibilities.

These authors, as well as several others throughout this section, report few differences between ITAs and native-speaking TAs on attitudes toward undergraduates and toward their teaching needs. However, Shirley Ronkowski suggests that methodological difficulties in study designs may be preventing us from ascertaining and documenting these differences. Evidence reported in many of the papers in this section suggests that assumptions of widespread inadequacies in the language and teaching competencies of ITAs and dissatisfaction with preparation programs are unwarranted.

Diane vom Saal articulates a dimension of the ITA issue that is often ignored: the focus on the undergraduate student role in communication difficulties with ITAs. Viewing ITA teaching situations as particular instances of intercultural communication, she suggests that, in addition to helping ITAs to improve their communicative abilities, we might use these occasions to increase the proficiencies of the undergraduates in intercultural communication.

Programs for ITA Pedagogical Preparation

Over the past several years, considerable progress has been achieved in conceptualizing and implementing comprehensive programs to prepare ITAs for teaching. Most emphasize the importance of addressing at least three important areas: language, pedagogy, and cross-cultural awareness. Questions on when to offer such programs, whom to include, and how to garner resources are addressed by several authors–Janet Constantinides, Katharine Schneider and Scott Stevens, Magda Costantino, Patricia Dunkel and Tannaz Rahman, Debra Sequeira and Ann Darling, Nancy Lay and Linda Mantel, and Rosslyn Smith. These authors consider a wide range of ITA issues and describe the programs that have evolved at their institutions. Brian Davis discusses a research project designed to assess the effects of a particular model of ITA development that relied on the use of videotaped protocols. Together, these papers offer the insights of experienced program planners and identify key ingredients of successful programs. Ideas for activities and strategies that can be adapted by others who are developing programs are presented throughout the papers.

Language Screening

A special consideration in the employment of international teaching assistants is language competency screening. In his paper, Jeff Mellor provides an overview of the common tests used to screen ITAs and the issues associated with their use. A major concern that arises with such tests, according to users, is their failure to situate the screening within the teaching context. Two papers, one by John Eck and the other by Patricia Carrell, Susanne Sarwark, and Barbara Plakens, address this concern by describing screening systems in place at their campuses that use videotaped simulated teaching situations to test classroom communicative competence. While recognizing that such tests have strong face validity, Patricia Byrd offers some cautions about the wholesale use of videotaped simulations. She calls instead for the development of a test that will serve the needs of the institution more quickly and with a high degree of accuracy.

Summary

The papers in this section testify to the progress that has been made in addressing the special case of the international teaching assistant. They also offer ideas, such as the use of videotaped simulations and role playing, that can be adapted to the preparation of native-speaking TAs as well. Of particular interest are indications that those involved in ITA development are continuing to enlarge the bounds of inquiry and practice, speculating on new measurement methodology that might yield more informative data on ITAs, continuing to strive for improved screening methods, and examining the impacts of various program strategies and curricula within their institutions.

–Nancy Chism

A Survey of International Teaching Assistants in Foreign Language Departments[1]

John F. Lalande II and Gerhard F. Strasser

The number of international students at American universities has risen steadily in recent years. Reports issued annually in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* indicate that the average annual rate of increase for the early 1980s is about 3% (Danto, 1982; Scully, 1981; and Woodcock, 1982). The October 29, 1986, issue of this publication focused once again on the matter of teaching assistants, featuring articles entitled, "Teaching Assistants Get Increased Training" (McMillen, 1976) and "Problems Arise in Foreign-Student Programs" (Heller, 1986). While foreign languages do not encounter the linguistic difficulties faced by mathematics departments, where "45% of the total number of classes and recitations are taught by TAs or part-timers," and of whom "one-third are foreign-born" (Heller, 1986), the non-American foreign language TAs certainly face adjustment problems similar to their counterparts in other departments.

The percentage of international students studying at the graduate level at American institutions is also often quite large. For example, Marshak (1983) reports that typically 90% of foreign students enrolled at major universities are graduate students. Indeed, as promising young American students become lured in great numbers to the lucrative rewards associated with business or engineering, graduate programs in the humanities may realize even greater increases in the number of international students working toward an American degree, especially from countries with high academic unemployment, such as West Germany. The news of a brighter job outlook in foreign languages in this country travels fast.

As the numbers and percentages of international teaching assistants (ITAs) increase, it behooves us to become more sensitive to the needs of these students. After all, not only is the welfare of our graduate and undergraduate programs at stake, but we have a moral responsibility to ITAs to ensure their continued growth as students *and* as teachers.

For the purposes of identification in this article, ITAs are defined as those whose native tongue is not English, and whose cultural upbringing occurred outside the United States. Thus, we can distinguish between TAs reared in this country (who may or may not be bilingual and exposed to bicultural experiences in the home, such as Hispanics) and TAs from abroad.

In our roles as TA supervisors and language program coordinators at two large universities, we have increasingly become aware of the growing number of ITAs in recent years.[2] In view of these observations, we felt that a study was in order to confirm or disprove our view that the number of ITAs is noteworthy at other institutions as well and that these ITAs do indeed possess unique needs. Since one of us had himself come to study in this country as an ITA, and since the other had come from within, our previously shared experiences led us to believe that some significant differences did exist, and that perhaps a small or pilot study would shed light on these issues.

Brief Historical Overview of TA Training and Foreign Language Instruction

Our review of the literature concerning graduate TA training in undergraduate foreign language instruction yielded a number of solid contributions. Works by Schulz (1980), Azevedo (1976), Berwald (1976), Szymanski (1978), Ervin and Muyskens (1982), and Cibaldi and Mirollo (1981) have greatly aided TA supervisors in providing effective pre- and in-service training. Outstanding as these articles were, however, none considered the particular needs of the ITA.

We found one notable exception, however–Sadow and Maxwell's article, "The Foreign Teaching Assistant and the Culture of the American University Class" (1983).[3] The authors call attention to various cultural and pedagogical problems typically encountered by ITAs. They also provide suggestions on how such problems might be avoided or reduced through the implementation of various preservice exercises. Although Sadow and Maxwell list no data to support their claims about methodological weaknesses characteristic of ITAs, our observations and experiences lead us to concur with their observations.

Collection of Data

In an attempt to establish a large yet manageable data base, we used the American Association of University Supervisors and Coordinators (AAUSC) membership list contained in its fall, 1982, *Newsletter*. Questionnaires and a cover letter were sent to approximately 120 individuals throughout the United States. The cover letter asked individuals to administer the questionnaires to all first-year TAs on the first day of class, for we estimated that TAs would have completed their preservice orientation programs by this time and would be able to reflect upon the program and related concerns. These items were sent out in early and mid-August. In addition, we requested cooperating parties to readminister portions of the questionnaires that we would send the following January. It was our aim to learn through the follow-up questionnaire, or posttest, whether TAs' perceptions regarding various matters had changed significantly from their earlier impressions (registered at the beginning of autumn term or semester). Unfortunately, the returns of the posttest questionnaires were so low that the related data had to be discarded. We are therefore focusing here only on data collected during early autumn semester, 1983. Responses received from 14 major departments coast-to-coast constitute the database of this report.

The pretest survey netted 105 questionnaires, 42 from ITAs and 63 from non-ITAs. (By contrast, the posttest returns amounted to only 52 questionnaires). In view of the fact that the questionnaires were completed by *only* new, first-year TAs, the relatively large percentage (40) of ITAs is worthy of note. While data collected from 14 institutions cannot be used to document conclusively the sizable influx of international students into American graduate degree programs, they do, nonetheless, provide partial support for such claims.

Finally, a word on the questionnaires themselves and the analysis of the data. Two questionnaires were prepared and distributed to TAs: the first to the ITAs, the second to the others. While both groups answered the same questions, the ITA group answered slightly more questions. Table 1 shows the distinction between

Table 1. Question Types Answered by TAs

Test Areas	Answered by ITAs	 Non-ITAs
I. Preliminary Information (9 questions)	x	
II. Information re: Your Adjustment to Life at Your U.S. Host Institution (21 questions)	x	
III. Information re: The Pedagogical Aspect of the Departmental Preservice Program (33 questions)	x	x*

**With the exception of the first four questions*

questionnaires and the data solicited from each group. By having both TA groups answer the majority of questions in Test Area III, we hoped to uncover similarities and differences that might lead to recommendations for the increased effectiveness of TA preservice orientation programs. Both groups entered their responses onto forms that were computer-read and tallied.[4]

Results

Section I (Preliminary Information) revealed how ITAs had come to learn of their opportunity to teach and study abroad, when they were able to begin preparations to travel to the United States, etc.

A total of 94% of our ITA sample had learned of the opportunity to teach and study at a United States institution either through a fellow student who had previously participated in the program, or through a university announcement. ITAs were evenly split (48% each) about the availability of a contact person at home or abroad with whom they could discuss the American university, its department and setting. Where such contacts were available, 60% were faculty/staff, 25% were students. Judging by their brief experiences in the United States, 83% of all ITAs were satisfied with the information provided by these same contact persons.

Nearly 60% received word of their acceptance during the period from May to August; 36% received word earlier. Only half of the ITAs registered satisfaction with the amount of time they had between notification of acceptance and the beginning of their appointment. The remainder regarded the time as either *barely* adequate (19%) or inadequate (17%).

When did most ITAs arrive in the United States? Our data reveal that nearly 75% came here more than one month prior to their reporting date at the university.

Finally, we posed four additional questions to shed light on the previous study and teaching experiences of ITAs. Two-thirds of our ITA sample had accumulated at least three years of university-level experience in their home countries; 10% had studied a minimum of two years, 12% a minimum of one year.

Where previous teaching experiences were concerned, 38% arrived with absolutely no teaching experience, whereas the remaining 57% had taught before. Those in the latter group had acquired their teaching experience at the following levels: elementary (10%), secondary (40%), college/university (38%). Lastly, we asked whether the teaching experience of our ITAs was acquired in the United States or in English-speaking Canada; for 35% of them it was, for 65% it was not.

Section II solicited information regarding ITAs' adjustment to life at United States host institutions. For 26%, this experience marked their first visit to the United States; the remaining 74% had visited previously (27% as tourists and 58% as either high school or college-level students). Of the ITAs who had spent time previously in the United States, no "typical" length of stay could be discerned. Answers exhibited wide variance (e.g., from less than one month to several years).

For 48% of the ITAs, their first arrival on campus occurred within two weeks of the first day of classes; 45% arrived in advance of two weeks.

With regard to housing, ITAs overwhelmingly (80%) prefer private, off-campus accommodations; only 14% elected to live in university housing, and another 2% in language houses. In response to another housing-related question, 45% arrived to discover that their lodgings were not ready. Of those ITAs who had secured accommodations in advance, 62% expressed satisfaction.

University (not departmental) orientation programs for new, incoming international students represented the next area of inquiry. Only 52% of ITAs attended such a program; most of them (84%) rated it as a positive, valuable experience.

Finally, we posed in this section several questions concerning nonpedagogical aspects of the departmental (not university) preservice orientation program. We found that the departments of 86% of our respondents offered separate preservice orientation programs, i.e., independent of those sponsored by the university. Most of these programs appeared geared toward new TAs, since 76% of the ITAs responded that attendance was required of new TAs alone. Only 17% responded that *all* TAs, new and experienced, were required to attend.

As mentioned earlier, Section III of our questionnaire contained the largest number of items. It also contained perhaps the most interesting questions, since they focused primarily on the pedagogical aspects of departmental preservice programs. The core of this section consisted of items borrowed from an instrument devised by Ervin and Muyskens (1982). This core is reproduced in Table 2, with the percentage of responses given by each group to the various questions. The first figure represents the non-ITA group, the second the ITAs.

Table 2. Responses to Question 14.1*

**Question 14-1 read: If the answer to question 11 (availability of departmental preservice programs) was yes, did the departmental program specifically address the following areas?*

	% Yes Non ITAs / ITAs	% Not Enough NonITAs / ITA s	% No NonITAs / ITAs	% Missing NonITAs /ITAs
a) computing and assigning grades	94/57	6/12	0/5	0/26
b) using the language laboratory, other media nd equipment	84/64	14/12	2/5	0/19
c) lesson organization and planning	89/91	14/12	2/5	0/3
d) learning about specific methods used in teaching here	87/79	8/2	5/2	0/17
e) introduction to a variety of teaching techniques	78/64	19/5	3/14	0/17

Table 2. Responses to Question 14.1 (continued)

	% Yes Non ITAs/ITAs	% Not Enough NonITAs/ITAs	% No NonITAs / ITAs	% Missing NonITAs /ITAs
f) illustration of recent innovative teaching techniques, e.g. TPR (Total Physical Response)	49/40	21/7	24/33	6/20
g) teaching pronunciation	67/48	24/17	6/19	3/15
h) teaching conversation, getting students to speak	86/76	11/5	2/2	1/17
i) learning how to make the best use of class time	83/74	13/2	5/5	0/19
k) learning about the text(s) used in the department and how to use it/them	76/69	17/2	5/7	2/22
l) teaching culture	63/38	22/19	11/24	4/19
m) teaching grammar	83/55	11/12	5/14	1/19
n) individual test preparation	63/43	22/21	3/14	12/22
o) coordinated test preparation	68/48	17/12	10/21	5/29
p) group grading of exams	57/48	16/12	25/17	2/23
q) handling administrative matters (e.g., attendance, reporting grades)	89/62	10/5	2/12	0/21
r) teaching the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)	78/69	19/7	2/7	1/17
s) adoption of a special "caretaker language" to facilitate early communication in the target language	29/38	13/5	40/33	18/24
t) use of English in the classroom	89/74	8/0	3/7	0/19
u) making the class interesting	90/79	11/5	2/0	0/16
v) correcting students' errors	87/79	10/5	3/2	0/14
w) holding of office hours	95/76	5/7	0/0	0/16

(There was no item j.)

Note: Totals across columns may exceed 100% due to rounding or the tendency of some respondents to choose both "yes" and "not enough" as their response.

Seventy percent of the students in each group also reported that the departmental preservice program provided some form of microteaching in front of peers.

Asked how they would rate the department's preservice program, TAs responded as follows (they were allowed to mark more than one answer):

		non-ITA	*ITA*
a)	Very valuable, informative; adequate for my needs	75	79
b)	Valuable though too short	22	24

		non-ITA	ITA
c)	Superficial; mechanical	5	0
d)	Too much geared to the American student	3	7
e)	Very well geared to the needs of a foreign student	8	17
f)	Other	13	5

In summary, no substantial differences in evaluation of departmental preservice programs were noted.

Since we consider an effective advising process vital to positive TA morale, particularly at the outset of graduate studies, we asked students to rate the departmental advising process (as they had experienced it prior to autumn term/semester registrations). Responses were as follows:

		non-ITA	ITA
a)	Very helpful, geared to personal needs and interests	38	38
b)	Helpful though somewhat restrictive in terms of the courses I wanted to take	13	19
c)	Adequate	30	12
d)	Superficial, inadequate	13	7

Again, no significant differences emerged from the data. One could conclude, therefore, that at the institutions participating in the study, the advising imparted to ITAs and non-ITAs was as favorably received by one group as by the other.

Discussion, Implications, and Suggestions

Perhaps the most interesting data associated with Section I concern the notification time given most ITAs regarding their award of a teaching assistantship and their acceptance into the program. It will be recalled that nearly 60% received such word only within the four months preceding commencement of autumn term/semester. Moreover, only one-half of our ITA sample was satisfied with the amount of advance time of notification. This percentage seems far too low and calls for remedial action by departments that can decide their TAships before summer and late spring.

It was surprising to note that 57% of our ITA sample had accumulated teaching experience before coming to the United States–a much higher percentage than non-ITAs. This would appear to contradict Sadow and Maxwell's (1983) undocumented claim that ITAs "often have no prior teaching experience. . . ." The implications of such employment are that ITAs tend to be more mature than their non-ITA counterparts. This surely results in an emotional, physical, and intellectual advantage for them as teachers vis-à-vis their American and Canadian peers. We are reluctant to gauge the attitudinal effects of such pairings between the more mature ITAs and the less mature non-ITAs, but supervisors would be well-advised to consider such effects.

Analysis of other data concerning preliminary information reveals that nearly one-half of the ITAs could collect reliable information about their American experience in advance, *and* most of these same individuals expressed satisfaction with these sources of information. Additional data should be collected to determine what effects these factors might have upon a possible reduction in the culture shock experienced by ITAs shortly after their arrival in this country.

Further data reveals that nearly 75% of all ITAs arrive in the United States more than one month prior to their reporting date at the university. Data from a related question reveal that approximately one-half of ITAs in this study arrived for the first time on campus within two weeks of autumn semester. The implications of these data could be that many ITAs arrive in the United States early in order to travel. If this is true, TA supervisors could take advantage of the ITAs' early arrival by inviting them to observe several hours of instruction in summer language courses, by distributing or making available to them copies of course texts and syllabi, and by seeking to develop a rapport with them on an individual basis prior to the hectic beginning of classes.

Section II solicited information regarding the ITAs' adjustment to life at the United States host institution. It is certainly significant that 74% of the ITAs had already been to the United States, and that most of that same subgroup had been in this country as students. Such students would certainly enjoy a decided advantage over their peers who lacked similar experience with, and exposure to, the American educational system. Additionally, it should help increase their effectiveness as prospective teachers of modern foreign languages and cultures. For those without substantial and perhaps intimate knowledge of the United States educational system, the TA supervisor might want to address this deficiency either through a component of the preservice orientation program or through personal session(s). Otherwise, the culture shock experienced by ITAs unfamiliar with United States culture may hamper their best efforts to become effective.

Another area of investigation concerning ITAs' adjustment to life at their United States host institutions regards housing. While it is not surprising that 80% reside in off-campus housing, the fact that so many (45%) come here to discover that their accommodations are not ready upon arrival should be noted. This discovery may distract those ITAs who have arrived late from fully concentrating on the preservice program.

We were surprised that only 52% of ITAs attended a university-sponsored orientation program for international students. Since the 14 departments participating in our study belong to major large universities, we assume they indeed offer such programs. Whatever the reason for low attendance in such programs, TA supervisors should require participation by ITAs. Since the university-sponsored orientation typically caters to basic survival needs of the ITA (e.g., procurement of social security numbers, health insurance), it allows the TA supervisor to devote more time to departmental policies and methodological concerns. Finally, if all university orientation programs for international graduate students are rated as highly as those in our ITA sample (84% evaluated the programs as positive and valuable), then the worth of these programs as determined by ITAs themselves represents yet another reason for attendance.

Table 2 features many of the areas that we felt represented essential components of a well-rounded, successful introduction (albeit preservice) to foreign language methodology. In our discussion of Table 2 data, we will first focus on ITA-related data, then compare the data collected from both groups.

ITAs expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of training they had received in several areas, most notably: individual test preparation (21%), teaching culture (19%), teaching pronunciation (17%), and 12% for each of the following: computing/assigning grades, using the language laboratory and audiovisual equipment, teaching grammar, coordinated test preparation, and group grading of tests. We find it encouraging to note that ITAs were, in fact, satisfied with their training in such a wide number of other, more important areas, and that their dissatisfaction with any single area would not seem to give cause for serious concern.

A comparison of ITA and non-ITA responses in Table 2 yields several noteworthy dividends. Certain areas emerged where non-ITAs differed from ITAs because they felt that insufficient attention had been paid to a particular aspect of the preservice program:

Introduction to a variety of teaching techniques (item e)–19% of the non-ITAs felt that not enough attention had been paid to this area, whereas only 5% of the ITA group expressed a similar view. Likewise:

Illustration of recent innovative teaching techniques (item f)–21% of the non-ITAs polled responded that not enough had been done in this area, whereas a mere 7% of the ITA group concurred.

Why such discrepancies in expectations? Perhaps the reason lies in earlier data documenting the extensive teaching experience of so many ITAs. Their prior teaching could explain why they were more satisfied with the amount of methods discussion in the brief workshop.

Another area characterized by dissatisfaction primarily on the part of non-ITAs concerned course texts and how to use them (item k). Only 2% of the ITA group felt that insufficient training had been received in this area, yet the figure was 17% for the non-ITA group–a considerable difference in opinion, and one that merits the attention of TA supervisors. It may well be that the greater maturity, experience, and confidence of ITAs prompts them to feel less dependent on the textbook. On the other hand, the texts may have been received and studied before the ITA's arrival in the United States.

The remaining two areas where primarily non-ITAs voiced noticeable disapproval with the amount of training were *learning how to make the best use of class time* (item i), and *teaching the four skills* (item r). The margins of difference between groups totaled 11% and 12%, respectively. As earlier, we regard these results as a possible outgrowth of the non-ITAs' insecurity and inexperience, contrasted with the ITAs' greater security, experience, and confidence.

Areas where both ITA and non-ITA groups stood in agreement that not enough had been done in the preservice program are included in Table 3. The data given in this table indicate a TA preference for more instruction in certain areas, including the presentation of culture–a point raised in a recent article by Algin (1986). We believe, however, that not everything can be treated sufficiently during the course of a brief preservice methodology workshop. Many an interesting topic must yield to

Table 3. TA Agreement on Insufficient Training in Preservice Program

Questionnaire Item	Ratings by Group NonITA	 ITA
b) using the language lab and other media equipment	14	12
g) teaching pronunciation	24	17
l) teaching culture	22	19
m) teaching grammar	11	12
n) individual test preparation	22	21
o) coordinated test preparation	17	12
p) group grading of tests and examinations	16	12

Note: Each questionnaire item was a subcomponent of question 14.1, which is given in Table 2.

more immediate, practical concerns associated with the first few days of instruction. These same topics desired by TAs, yet considered momentarily inappropriate by the TA supervisor, ought to be taken up during a subsequent methods course. Indeed, a logical conclusion to be drawn from the data in Table 3 is that since its items are central to language training, there should be an ongoing methods course for TAs in their first year.

Another important insight to be derived from an analysis of the above data might be that in their eagerness to learn, many TAs believe that everything about successful, effective teaching can be communicated within a few short days. In this respect, they are as naive as the young undergraduate who enrolls in a beginning foreign language course and expects to become fluent within a few weeks. We must therefore explain to our new TAs that some items are better treated after they have absorbed the orientation session and gained a modicum of experience.

One area of agreement between groups concerned their overall rating of the departmental preservice program, which was most positive. As gratifying as those results were, however, TA responses from both groups to the next question were far from complimentary. Apparently, the departmental advising process experienced by at least one-half of the TAs in each group left much to be desired. Certainly, this represents an area in need of remedial attention by many departments.

Areas of Further Research

Our study points to several areas in which future research efforts could be directed. First, we hope that a study involving more subjects and more departments might be conducted. By involving more subjects (particularly those without membership in the AAUSC), the reliability and general applicability of our findings could become significantly enhanced. Second, a posttest designed to measure possible changes in ITA needs and attitudes seems desirable. It may well be that ITAs' needs at the beginning of the academic year differ markedly by midyear or year's end. Moreover, the needs and impressions of first-year ITAs should be compared with those who have studied in this country beyond the first year. Third, the issue of possible differences across language groups of TAs should be investigated. Could it be that the needs of German or Austrian ITAs differ significantly from those of French ITAs, or that European ITAs contrast substantially with their Southeast Asian counterparts? Fourth, a new instrument (or at least a portion thereof) is required that will be more open-ended, thus allowing ITAs to express concerns, impressions, and needs not contained on the original questionnaire. Fifth, a comparison of student reactions to various teacher traits might shed light on important areas that need to be stressed more for one group of natives than for another. For example, Sadow and Maxwell (1983) point out that ITAs often fail to realize how sensitive and easily hurt American students can be to the direct styles of correction and criticism characteristically employed by ITAs. Non-ITAs, they maintain, use a more indirect, "Yes, but . . ." approach, thereby helping the American student save face (and spirit). Would an analysis of student reactions bear out such claims? Finally, consider the issue of different language skills (plus culture) that must be taught. When compared with non-ITAs, do ITAs have more difficulty teaching one skill than another? Our informal observations lead us to believe that ITAs often experience greater difficulty than non-ITAs in developing speaking at the elementary level; we believe that there is a corollary between this and the fact that many ITAs seem unwilling and/or inept at generating caretaker speech. Similarly, where the development of writing at the intermediate level is concerned, Gasser (1983) points out that grading essays is often a more painstaking, laborious experience for ITAs because they cannot as readily recognize errors resulting from native-language interference.

Conclusions

While certain limitations are placed on the generalizability of results achieved in this study, several implications emerge for those who supervise, guide, and train TAs. These implications are: (a) there appear to be many similarities and some differences between the needs and attitudes of first-year ITAs and non-ITAs; (b) we should be sensitive to these needs and cater to them; (c) it would behoove TA supervisors and department heads to note particularly those areas of dissatisfaction registered by one or both TA groups; (d) as favorably disposed as TAs may be toward departmental preservice training programs, such programs can be strengthened or augmented by a follow-up methods course; and (e) whereas we have taken steps to measure the linguistic and educational (i.e., learning) competence of ITAs, we must begin to interpret the social competence of our ITA recruits, or they may falsely interpret the behavioral characteristics of their students.

In his keynote address to the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States, Marshak (1983) stated that the excellence of our graduate programs is responsible for the attractiveness of American institutions. Given that he is correct, then our manifestation of excellence must appear in every aspect of graduate education, including teacher training. Hopefully, this report will help to serve that end.

Notes

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A preliminary version of this paper was read in November 1985, at the Chicago meeting of the American Association of University Supervisors and Coordinators in conjunction with ACTFL.

[2] In the autumn of 1986, the department of Germanic languages and literatures at the University of Illinois employed a total of 32 TAs, 15 of whom were ITAs–from Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, France, and India. At The Pennsylvania State University, the ratio was 16:9 (all ITAs came from the Federal Republic).

[3] There is an increasing number of in-house publications produced by TA supervisors, graduate schools, learning research centers, and similar institutional agencies. Several of these graduate assistant handbooks were on display at the Ohio State University conference, but most of them do not specifically–or exclusively–address the needs of ITAs, and they are not in wide circulation. (Both the University of Iowa and the University of California at Santa Barbara have produced specific handbooks for ITAs.)

[4] We are grateful to Edward Rosenstock, Instructional Services, The Pennsylvania State University, who prepared our data for computer analysis and authored an appropriate program. Of course, the authors assume total responsibility for the subsequent presentation and discussion of this material.

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John F. Lalande II is Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Illinois, Urbana. Gerhard F. Strasser is Assistant Professor of German at The Pennsylvania State University.

International and American TAs: Similarities and Differences

Shirley Ronkowski

Training programs designed for international teaching assistants assume differences between international and American TAs in terms of attitudes about teaching styles, expectations of students, and views regarding the TA-student relationship. As early preparation for writing an orientation handbook for international TAs (ITAs) at the University of California at Santa Barbara, we began an investigation to gain more specific knowledge about these assumptions. By learning more about the experiences of ITAs, we also hoped to identify areas of cross-cultural sensitivity that those of us who seek to assist and train them might need to develop. As is often the case, our investigation left us with more questions than answers and has led us to reexamine our questions.

We began our research by conducting a survey of both international and American TAs. (TAs who were listed in the graduate division records as foreign TAs, as per their passport status, were identified as ITAs. All other TAs were included as American TAs.) In November of autumn quarter, questionnaires were sent to nearly 200 international and 450 American TAs. Of the 190 respondents, 107 were American and 88 were international. It was impossible to calculate a meaningful response rate, since campus lists of TAs for the current academic year included TAs appointed for all three quarters, many of whom were to begin their TAship in later quarters.

In our analysis, we ran crosstabs for each question within and between international and American TA groups for the following demographic factors:

1. Absence or presence of teaching experience prior to entering UCSB;
2. Type of academic discipline (the social sciences and humanities comprised one category, while the physical sciences, engineering, and mathematics comprised a second); and
3. Type of teaching responsibility (discussion sections, lab sections, or grading only).

We examined data for ITAs to determine whether or not their length of time in the United States (less than or more than one year) was a factor in the way they responded to the survey. Data for various cultural groups could not be compared given the fact that our sample of 88 international TAs represented 25 different countries, making categories within cultural areas too small to be useful.

The only statistically significant differences found among TA demographic groups was on a question that required respondents to rank order eight important teaching characteristics. TAs in the social sciences and humanities ranked relations with students significantly higher than TAs in the physical sciences, engineering, and mathematics. The rank orders given by international and American TAs were not significantly different from one another. The following table reports how all TA respondents rank ordered eight important teaching characteristics of a TA.

Table 1. Rank Order of Important Characteristics of a TA

(1= most important 8= least important)

1. Good at presenting subject matter.
2. Ready to answer students' questions.
3. Knowing the subject matter very well.
4. Meeting student expectations.
5. Having a real interest in students.
6. Making class sessions interesting.
7. Having a friendly relationship with students.
8. Being strict with students.

An open-ended question asking TAs to describe initial or continuing teaching difficulties resulted in similar responses between American TAs and ITAs (see Table 2).

Table 2. TA Perception of Disturbing Student Behaviors

Question: Many TAs find certain student behaviors to be disturbing or difficult to handle. Please describe any such student behaviors you have experienced.

In answer to the above question, the largest number of American and international TA responses fell into the following five categories:

	All TAs (N=190)	ATAs (N=107)	ITAs (N=88)
Apathy and student attitudes	36%	32%	22%
Lack of consideration	20%	20%	23%
No problems	18%	16%	22%
No response	17%	13%	23%
Lack of responsibility	14%	16%	11%

International and American TAs also gave similar descriptions of the student behaviors that they found difficult to handle (see Table 3).

Table 3. Teaching Difficulties

Question: Many teaching assistants find that they have difficulties with certain teaching behaviors that are expected of them by students. Please describe any such difficulties you have experienced.

	All TAs (N=190)	ATAs (N=107)	ITAs (N=88)
No problems	27%	19%	39%
No response	24%	23%	25%
Dealing with student expectations	17%	19%	14%
Presentation and speaking skills	8%	11%	4%
Student/TA relations	7%	6%	11%
Motivating discussion	7%	7%	6%

Numerous similarities rather than differences between ITAs' and American TAs' responses were found in our analysis of all survey questions. This lack of differences between the two groups was not what we expected. One possibility was, of course, that the type of questions contained in the survey could not discern the differences we sought to identify. We also speculated that a survey might not be a sensitive enough instrument to disclose differences in perception and experience between the two groups of TAs. Hence, in order to ascertain further information about ITA perceptions of and experiences in the American classroom, we conducted in-depth interviews of 25 ITAs representing various countries and cultures. During the interviews we asked the ITAs to expand on their survey answers and to provide further information about their experience. We did find expected differences in terms of lack of ITA understanding of certain student expressions and jokes. While all ITAs mentioned a concern about their language difficulties, our interests were geared toward the many interesting anecdotes that indicated differences between international and American TA perspectives.

However, even differences between international and American TAs indicated by anecdotal material appeared to be based on a similarity of experience between the two groups. For instance, in answer to the survey, both American TAs and ITAs described similar student behaviors that reflected a lack of consideration and rudeness on the part of students. However, during the interviews, many ITAs talked about being initially surprised when American students did not stand as the TA entered the room, thus suggesting that the degree of student rudeness experienced by ITAs must have been considerably greater than that of American TAs.

Taking another example, many American TAs indicated surprise at how academically ill prepared students were for their courses. International TAs were also surprised at students' lack of preparedness and went on to describe their countries' standardization of curriculum and testing that do not exist in the United States. Again, given the background information supplied by ITAs, the degree to which they perceived students to be ill prepared appeared to be significantly greater than that for American TAs.

Survey and interview data both strongly suggest that differences in reported classroom experiences and perceptions between international and American TAs were differences in degree rather than differences in kind. As would be expected, ITA expectations were further from the realities of the American classroom than those of the American TAs. We were surprised that we were unable, even in in-depth interviews, to uncover any consistent and overall differences between the classroom perceptions and experiences of the two TA groups. Of course, a large problem in our investigation was the small and highly culturally diverse sample of ITAs in our survey and on our campus. This required us to treat them as if they were a homogeneous group. In addition, we questioned the usefulness of self-report in uncovering certain kinds of cross-cultural perceptions and differences.

Hence, we began looking at classroom observation data that had been gathered earlier by one of the graduate students working on the present project. Two Asian TA classrooms had been observed for approximately four weeks. Interviews with both TAs and their students did not reveal any perceptions of specific communication problems. However, observational data suggested that there were serious problems with classroom participation structures in at least one of the TA's classrooms. While at least some incidents of student and TA frustration seemed evident, neither the TA nor the students had described or indicated any such difficulties. Again, we became concerned about the usefulness of self-report, the ability of our data collecting instruments to gather the type of data we were seeking, and the willingness of TAs and students to disclose problems in the classroom.

Rather than being able to answer the questions we posed, we were now facing new questions about how the answers to our questions could be satisfactorily pursued. We now debated whether or not ITAs are able to first, identify, and second, communicate, deep-seated areas of misunderstanding or lack of understanding between themselves and their students that may exist as a result of the cross-cultural experience.

It was apparent that our survey was not able to discern any differences between the perceptions and experiences of international and American TAs and that future survey instruments would need more refinement and to be accompanied by observational data. Interview data provided us with interesting and useful anecdotes that suggested differences in degree but not in kind between the classroom perceptions and experiences of international and American TAs. Our observational data suggest that observational data might produce revealing results if a quantified observational tool were used and combined with interview data from TAs and students. In other words, a multileveled research design appears necessary in this area of cross-cultural investigation. Such research would best be carried out on a national basis or over time so that data from various cultural groups could be treated separately.

Shirley Ronkowski is Instructional Specialist and TA Training Coordinator at the University of California-Santa Barbara.

The Undergraduate Experience and International Teaching Assistants

Diane R. vom Saal

Introduction

The presence of international teaching assistants (ITAs) in the American college classroom has become a frequent topic of discussion at many universities. At issue are the speaking and listening skills of teaching assistants who are not native speakers of English. However, in the case of the intercultural classroom, there has been less attention focused on undergraduates' contribution to the interaction than on the oral proficiency of the ITA. For this discussion, the intercultural classroom can be defined as a classroom with an international teaching assistant and American undergraduates. Both the ITA and the undergraduates contribute to interaction to the intercultural classroom. Therefore, both must be taken into consideration in order to improve the classroom experience.

The undergraduates in an intercultural classroom are similar to second language learners in that they are exposed to a new set of characteristics as they process and adjust their behavior to the verbal and nonverbal behavior of an ITA. In this paper I will offer some examples of the type of processing of communication that is required of American undergraduates for successful interaction with ITAs in the intercultural classroom, as well as some suggestions to help undergraduates increase the number of opportunities for successful communication. ITAs and undergraduates can both benefit from increased awareness on the part of undergraduates of issues concerning ITAs and the intercultural classroom.

The frustration felt by an undergraduate in classroom interaction with an ITA is usually assumed to concern the ITA's level of oral proficiency. However, the undergraduate's lack of experience in intercultural communication may be contributing to frustration. While it is certainly appropriate to concentrate on the improvement of ITAs' communication skills, it may be possible to improve the classroom climate by focusing on the intercultural classroom skills of undergraduates.

The characterizing of communication with an ITA by an undergraduate as frustrating is sincere and accurate, whether it is because of the ITA's oral proficiency level, the undergraduate's own lack of knowledge of strategies for intercultural classroom communication, or a combination of the above. When I mention to people that I am working with teaching assistants and especially ITAs, they often tell anecdotes from their own or a friend's experience where classroom communication with an ITA caused some anxiety. I have heard this type of personal reminiscing from undergraduates as well as former students in such roles as legislator, secretary, and business manager. In one account, the ITA, although allegedly unintelligible most of the time, would often ask, "Do you understand that?" The person telling me the story said, "What were we supposed to do, say 'We can't understand a word you say'?" The feeling of helplessness in this type of situation leads to frustration. However, if the ITA's oral proficiency level is not too low, undergraduates can be helped to develop strategies for recognizing this situation as one that calls for the suspending of some cultural taboos and the initiating of communicating strategies not called for in intracultural situations.

One reason for helping undergraduates develop such communication strategies for the intercultural classroom is that it is important for raising expectations and avoiding the self-fulfilling prophecy of communication problems with ITAs. Undergraduates may expect problems with ITAs after hearing about other students' frustrations (for further discussion, see Orth, 1982). If students enter the classroom with negative expectations, it may do more than harm their chances for successful communication; it may change the behavior of their ITAs. Jones (1986, p. 42) points out that "impressions are normally formed through a process of behavioral interaction in which we elicit much of the information we then attempt to process."

We know from experience and from the literature (Bailey, 1982) that there are both very successful ITAs and others who are not able to communicate well with their students. One could ask why we should burden undergraduates with having to make an effort to improve the situation rather than recommend a transfer to a more fluent TA. One reason is that the skills involved in intercultural communication are becoming more and more important to the graduates of our colleges and universities. Many undergraduates will go into fields where they will benefit from good skills for interacting with people of different cultural backgrounds. There is also reason to assume that much can be done about communication in the intercultural classroom. Training programs are already helping ITAs improve their classroom interaction skills. However, undergraduates are an important part of the picture. They should not be thought of as passive information processors, waiting for ITAs to improve their communication skills (vom Saal, 1986). Analyses of communication events in the intercultural classroom will show how cultural differences can complicate communication while revealing strategies for improving the experience.

Classroom Culture

"In the college classroom culture, the norms for behavior and the values by which students are judged are largely extensions of mainstream Anglo culture." This statement by John C. Condon (1986, p. 11) refers to the American college classroom with an American instructor. During this century, classroom behavior has been regulated by more and more subtle behaviors. The implication relevant to our discussion is that undergraduates in intercultural classrooms have many adjustments to make. Much earlier in our history, before the student population began to diversify (Angelo, 1983), classrooms were filled with friends who lived together in the same dormitory, had similar family backgrounds (and thus similar conversation styles), and socialized together outside of class. Professors and students interacted outside of class at organized activities. The underlying conversation styles were similar and comfortable. Moreover, the homogeneity of background lent itself to the formation of an overt set of rules for behavior in the classroom: students stood up when the teacher entered; they raised their hands to ask questions. Everybody knew the rules. As the group became more heterogeneous, classroom interaction began to be organized by more subtle behaviors, such as deference shown in question formation, choice of level of language formality, and some nonverbal signals, such as posture, gaze direction, timing, and manner of entering and leaving the classroom. These characteristics help regulate conversational interaction and change from one culture to another (vom Saal, 1984). Thus, we have a potential source of disruption in cases of intercultural classroom interaction.

Research on Interaction

Several fields have contributed to our understanding of interaction in the intercultural classroom. There has been the development of relevant research fields such as classroom interaction, nonverbal communication, conversation management, intercultural communication, applied linguistics, anthropology, and sociolinguistics. Characteristics associated with communicative behavior are paralinguistic aspects (e.g., pitch, speech rate, timing of pauses); verbal aspects (e.g., grammar, vocabulary); speech style (e.g., accent, dialect, language); discourse order (a particular sequence of functions for a particular purpose, such as asking for a favor); and nonverbal aspects (such as gaze direction, movement, speaking distance) (Bourhis, 1985). These are the characteristics of conversation that come together to create interaction. For example, in an investigation of intercultural conversation, side comments were found to have microlevel characteristics (e.g., speech rate, volume, gaze direction) that differed from comments made directly on the topic (vom Saal, 1985). These characteristics can change from one culture to another. Mohatt and Erickson (1981) compared a native American teacher to an Anglo-American teacher in a school for native American children, and found that the native American teacher taught at a slower pace, avoided direct commands, used more small group work, and waited an average of 4.6 seconds for student responses as opposed to an average of two seconds for the Anglo-American. In another study, in Hawaii (Welkowitz, Bond, & Feldstein, 1984), Japanese school children showed a preference for shorter turns than Caucasian children. These studies illustrate some of the characteristics that must be integrated among conversational participants to create interaction.

Examples from ITAs' Classrooms

An analysis of several events from college classrooms shows just how complex the intercultural classroom can be.

1. The first example is from an instructional design class taught by a Nigerian ITA whose English was very good. During one class, he had been explaining how to thread a movie projector. At one point he explained that the film looked different on each side and that one side was the smooth side and the other was the emulsion side. He pronounced the word "emulsion" with a barely audible middle vowel and at a rapid rate of speed. He then continued his description of the two sides. After a few more comments he explained why the information was important. Then a student said, "One side is smooth and what was the other side called?" This question came when the ITA had moved the discourse to a meta-level to explain the reason behind the explanation of the film, namely that it would run successfully only if the correct side were up. The student who had not understood (and others who may not have understood) waited for a certain place in the discourse to interject the question. This student had analyzed the discourse organization to find an appropriate place to ask the question.

A similar event took place when the ITA pointed out the sound drum. He talked about where it was and then explained why it was important to know. At that same point of transition to the meta-level, a student asked the Nigerian TA, "Hey, Peter, could you point out the sound drum again?" Because it came after the topic change, this request may have involved a similar analysis of the discourse order. This is the process of analysis below the level of awareness that students are going through when they want to ask a question. This is a demanding skill! What makes it even more complicated is that there is no guarantee, given possible differences in his native language's discourse pattern, that the ITA is expecting questions at precisely that point. If he is not, then the questions will appear to be interruptions. Research on black and white children during sharing time in preschool (Michaels and Collins, 1981) revealed that the white teacher interacted successfully with the white children during their stories, but unwittingly interrupted the black children during their stories because of failure to perceive their discourse order, which involved what the investigators called chaining of events rather than chronological order focused on one theme.

2. The following is an example showing uneasiness due to peer behavior in the intercultural classroom. In one class, an economics TA from Latin America was going over a quiz with her discussion section. One student kept going over and over the language of one of the questions to show why he had interpreted it differently. The cycle of turns was not able to be resolved, possibly because they each expected a different sequence of discourse functions to bring the discussion to closure. This can be difficult to do in intercultural conversations. After a certain point, other students began to shift in their seats and one said to his neighbor in an annoyed tone, "He must have gotten it wrong," possibly implying that the student was not justified in continuing to take any more of the class's time for this problem.

3. In an economics class another Nigerian TA was asked a question by a student. A second student turned to a neighbor and, referring to the student asking the question, said, "These people don't listen, God!" The situation where one student understands what has been said and another does not is probably likely in an intercultural classroom where the level of skill in intercultural communication varies among students. This may lead to some frustration for those who understand the ITA. Moreover, those who do not understand may sense this frustration and hesitate to clear up their misunderstandings. Communication apprehension in college classrooms has been attributed to negative reinforcement and inadequate skill development (Daly, 1986). Developing undergraduates' skills for learning in the intercultural classroom might help alleviate frustration and improve classroom communication.

4. In the class mentioned in the previous example, students visibly changed their posture when they understood the explanation of an easy question on the quiz. They breathed out, looked down and moved down in their seats. This could easily be missed by an instructor unconsciously expecting another type of cue. Or it could be a response shaped by the TA after weeks of asking what the problem was when students were looking up at the end of the explanation.

5. Joel was a TA from Mexico. When he asked the class if they understood his explanation, some nodded but one made a hand gesture by rotating the wrist in a gesture known in English as meaning "sort of" or "not really." Joel saw the gesture, but then moved on to explain the next homework question. Then he asked, "Did you understand this one?" The student mentioned above shook her head to mean "no." Joel understood her nonverbal message this time and asked, "What's the problem?" This student had used an important strategy: change the form of the message if the first attempt does not succeed. Less experienced visitors to other countries sometimes fail to use this strategy, for example, when they say the exact same words louder.

6. The next example is from a beginning French class for American undergraduates taught by an American TA. When a student could not remember what number came after 65 in French, the TA suggested in French that she go back

to five and think about it. Then the TA said slowly in French, "un, deux, trois . . ." The student sat looking blankly at the TA, although she had earlier produced the numbers from one to six. The TA was directing the student to compare the numbers one through 10 with 61 through 66 in order to help her remember 66. Apparently the student was looking for a different motive for the TA's request (expecting to stay, perhaps, on the same level of abstraction), and so she could not make sense of the request to move to a higher level of abstraction.

In a similar vein, when American students are trying to make sense of ITAs' communications and are depending heavily on the context to do so, they may have to abstract to a more general level in order to put the context to use. For example, in the case where the ITA said "emulsion" and was not understood, the students may have been expecting parallel construction. Peter had said, "This side is the smooth side and this side is the emulsion side." Since "smooth" is an adjective, they may have been expecting another adjective. When they did not recognize the pronunciation, they would first try to match the sounds with an adjective that would be appropriate in the context. Then they would have to run through another set from the possible types of words that could fill that slot, such as nouns. They may not have to do this type of analysis with a native-speaking TA if clear pronunciation indicated whether the term was one they were familiar with or not.

Discussion

Research at the micro level shows that humans process minute pieces of conversational data at split-second intervals. I have found differences in timing patterns looking at intercultural interaction at one-sixtieth of a second at a time (vom Saal, 1984). However, we need to be in small groups or dyads to put our sensors to good use. In the classroom the instructor may be far away. It is difficult to process microlevel data from a distance and we may end up not knowing when to take a turn or feeling intimidated about taking one. One way to improve the situation would be to have more interaction between instructors and students outside of class. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* recently described a study that reported that "faculty and administrators distance themselves from student life. . . ." (1986, p. 16). At a time when more information is needed about individuals' personal conversation styles for successful classroom communication, less information is available than in the past because of the decrease in interaction between instructors and undergraduates outside the classroom. This type of interaction would give both instructors and students an opportunity to process information about the other person's conversation style and nonverbal behavior, including timing, and then this knowledge could be applied back in the classroom.

In our personal lives, Americans' corrections of other people's surface language problems, such as grammar, are usually restricted to people with whom we are intimately connected. Even then, there is a negative connotation to interrupting the flow of conversation to focus on the surface form of the language rather than on the meaning, especially for the person being corrected. Also, there may be some feeling of embarrassment for those who show their vulnerability through a lack of verbal skills. This may not be a universal assumption. For example, members of some cultures might feel it their duty to point out grammar or vocabulary mistakes for the sake of the beauty of the language. The result would be that the nonnative speaker would have more opportunity to learn about the language. The opposite approach would be to remain silent and allow people in some cases to continue making the same mistakes or remain misunderstood because of the belief that pointing out language mistakes would cause the person to lose face.

Undergraduates may start out in small towns or sections of cities and spend almost all of their time until college interacting with people who know their background fairly well and have a similar conversation style. Then they go to college, and suddenly they are surrounded by different language styles and people who cannot depend on shared background to fill in the gaps (see Figure 1).

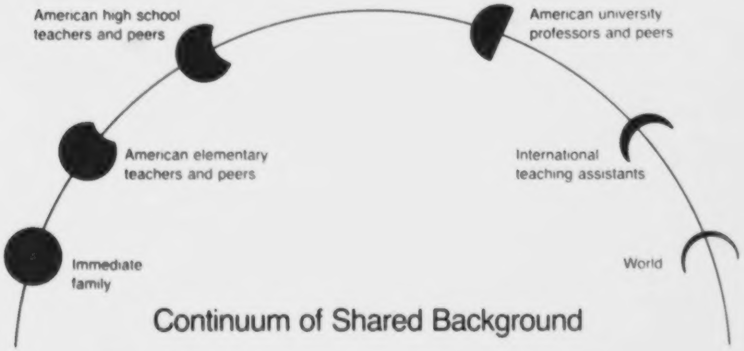
American high school teachers and peers
American university professors and peers
American elementary teachers and peers
International teaching assistants
Immediate family
World
Continuum of Shared Background

Figure 1
American undergraduate's shared world offers an opportunity to learn more and more complex communication skills

Undergraduates in classrooms with international TAs can be compared to beginning language learners who are trying to make sense out of a new language environment. It is likely that they go through some of the same stages as second language learners. They have great need for context in order to look for redundancy that clarifies the message. Language learners also need feedback as to whether or not they have understood what they have heard.

Searching for Solutions

The above discussion identifies an environment that is inhibiting human development processes similar to the inhibition caused by a high level of anxiety for some test takers. The better we understand it, the easier it will be to find solutions.

Looking at undergraduates with ITAs as language learners leads to some strategies that may improve communication. Language learners need feedback in order to revise their developing picture of the language. Undergraduates need to learn how to get that type of feedback, for example, by paraphrasing what the TA has just said. "So what you're saying, then, is . . ." According to Capella (1985, p. 78), for listeners in general "prescriptions for competent listening . . . require clarification, feedback, restatement, or astute questioning." Undergraduates with ITAs, like language learners (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982), also need context, so, instead of saying they do not understand, they might try asking for a concrete example.

Depending on the distance between the ITAs' and the undergraduates' communication characteristics, the intercultural classroom naturally creates some anxiety because of differences between the actual interaction and the expected interaction in terms of microlevel characteristics such as timing of pauses, which are below our level of awareness. Undergraduates need to be aware that an anxious reaction to the situation is normal, but that they can learn skills to consciously improve communication in the intercultural classroom.

Undergraduates can be prepared for the characteristics of the intercultural classroom so that they will understand what stages they will go through during the course and feel capable of exerting some control over the situation. An American reporter in Paris once mentioned that while he spoke grammatical French, his accent was extremely poor. When a listener could not understand him, he would say, "What's the matter? Don't you speak French?" Then the conversation would continue in French with far fewer problems because the listener would work to interpret the accent rather than unconsciously tuning out.

If undergraduates can be convinced that it is possible to improve their ability to communicate by changing their own behavior in their classes with ITAs, they will be learning a lesson for life, a resource for the future. They can observe their own classroom interaction by noticing gaze behavior, timing, volume, speaking distance. Also, they can be reassured that it is culturally acceptable to discuss language problems with their ITAs. The subtle nonverbal behaviors that they may not have been aware of with their American teachers have been replaced by another system, one that they have to figure out in order to understand their normal responses to it.

One strategy for improving communication at the beginning of the semester would be to ask permission to record the ITA and listen to the recording until they understand what is being said. They will have experienced the ITA's pronunciation system and unique style of speaking. When combined with the experience of interacting in person with the ITA, this information should increase the chances for successful interaction in future classes with this ITA. The student needs to know that, because of unconscious attitudes about power and status, it may take a conscious effort to learn to interpret the ITA's idiolect of English.

Talking to the ITA outside of class is extremely important for gathering data about the ITA's conversation style. The student may feel uncomfortable, but perhaps an awareness that a certain amount of uneasiness is an automatic response to microlevel differences in conversation styles will help. It may also help to ask the ITA a little about his or her country in order to increase shared background knowledge. Erickson and Shultz (1982) found a higher amount of information transfer between undergraduates and college advisors when there was more shared background.

Conclusion

The intercultural college classroom is an important area for more research. The number of international teaching assistants and international faculty on American campuses continues to increase. College students need to improve their intercultural communicating skills for the intercultural classroom and in preparation for their professional lives in an increasingly global marketplace. Having an ITA can be viewed as an opportunity for further education. Of course, it is essential to help ITAs to improve communication skills as much as possible, but they cannot change the classroom experience without the cooperation of their undergraduate students. The issue is centered in the interaction, not in the undergraduates or ITA alone.

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Diane R. vom Saal is Director of Teaching Assistant Training and Development and Instructor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Designing a Training Program for International Teaching Assistants

Janet C. Constantinides

Introduction

Many universities are now considering ways in which to provide adequate training for international teaching assistants.[1] In this paper I will discuss important questions that need to be addressed in the design or redesign of such training programs. I will also present a newly developed typology of training programs, a discussion of design factors, and a consideration of design decisions.

Typology of Training Programs

In her article reporting on a survey of training programs for international teaching assistants (ITAs) in 1982, Nina Turitz (1984, p. 43) divided them into two types, seminar-type and orientation-type. "The seminar-type program meets throughout the term for a given number of hours per week; the orientation-type meets for a short period of time prior to the beginning of the international TA's first term." Using that as a basis, I developed a typology of training programs that combines the length of the program with its timing. Each type has advantages and disadvantages.

Orientation

This is a program of one to five days offered before the ITA enters a teaching situation and usually just prior to the beginning of the academic term. The advantages of this type of program are that it can be offered before the ITAs become involved with other courses and duties and they can thus focus on the content and processes of the orientation without being diverted by other considerations, such as grades in their academic courses. Additionally, a five-day program is inexpensive in the costs of instruction and even housing if the institution offers that as part of the program. Often there is already some type of orientation program for international students in place at the institution, and a special program for ITAs can be "piggy-backed" onto or woven into that program. Certainly there is often a precedent for having students arrive on campus a few days before the beginning of the term.

The disadvantages of such a program, however, are important ones. First, the time is very short. Five days is not sufficient time for much change to take place in the understanding or behavior of the ITA. If the ITA orientation is interwoven into an existing program, this may create cognitive overload (as a result of receiving too much information in too short a time), thus the ITA may not be able to assimilate any of the information about cultural orientation to American classrooms and appropriate language use. Additionally, ITAs may find themselves disoriented during this period, faced with a new culture and a new campus as well as a new role to play.

Orientation with Follow-up

The above orientation program has an additional component during the academic term that may include class sessions, visitations to the ITA's class or consultation with the ITA by the orientation staff or the academic department faculty. The primary advantage of the additional follow-up component is that it lengthens the time during which change can be effected. But it negates some of the advantages of the previous type, producing such disadvantages as adding to the cost and causing ITAs to have to deal with the training program, coursework, and possibly teaching duties, thus dividing their attention.

Preterm Course

This course is offered for two or more weeks (usually during a vacation or between terms) prior to the first term in which the ITA is assigned to teaching. Such courses are intensive or semiintensive, typically engaging the ITA in four to six hours of class and lab per day. The advantages here are obvious: Since it is offered before the academic term begins, the ITAs can concentrate on the materials and processes presented without being diverted by academic course requirements and perhaps even teaching duties. Additionally, the ITAs are prepared before entering the classroom for the first time. In *The Art and Craft of Teaching*, Wolcowitz (1982, pp. 10-25) writes about the importance of the first day of class and what he calls the "implied contract" that is established during the first day. The impression made by any teacher on the first day of class sets the tone for the rest of the term. If the new ITA makes a bad impression or sets up conditions in the implied contract with which the students are not comfortable or to which they take exception, it is very difficult to overcome that bad impression or "renegotiate" the contract. But if the ITA has spent some time in a training program before entering the class, there will be time to effect change, both pedagogical and linguistic, which will help to avoid some of the problems.

The disadvantages begin with the additional cost; a three-week intensive program, for example, may require as much budget for instruction as a term-long course. Also, there may be perceived disadvantages in requiring new ITAs to arrive as early as a month before the term begins. In our experience at the University of Wyoming (UW), in which we have a three-week preterm course (with follow-up) in August, the perception of the department chairs and some deans was that it would be a problem, but the evaluation of the ITAs is that the early arrival is *not* a disadvantage, but rather an advantage, because by the time that the autumn semester began they felt fully a part of the campus, had found housing, had adjusted to our altitude (7,200 feet), and had met other graduate assistants in their departments. Depending on how the program is structured and funded, the early arrival could result in additional costs to the ITAs, if the students are expected to pay their own expenses during the training program, or to the institution. In our case, the university provided room and board for those who had to arrive early and board only for those already in Laramie; other institutions have provided stipends for the time ITAs must spend in the training program to help cover the costs to the ITA.

Another problem is that there are often no other classes in session for students to observe. In many programs, like UW's, part of the instruction in the program involves their observing other classes and sections of the class the ITAs will teach. This is done for two reasons: (a) so that they can observe the behavior of students, American faculty, and TAs (or successful ITAs), and (b) to help the ITAs to become astute observers so that, once they are out of the training program, they can continue to use those observation skills in improving their teaching.[2]

Concurrent Course

This course lasts 10 to 15 weeks and is taken during the first term the ITA is teaching. It thus becomes part of the course load of the ITA. This can be an advantage if it thus provides some course load relief for the ITA during the first term of teaching by reducing the number of courses in the major required during that term. Also, the ITAs can immediately apply to their teaching situations the materials and strategies acquired in the program, thereby increasing their motivation. There is also the advantage that other courses/sections are easily available for observation (see above). Also, the institution should not have to provide additional budget for housing, etc., since the students would already be on campus taking courses.

There are, in my opinion, two major disadvantages to the concurrent course. (The University of Wyoming offered our training program as a concurrent course for three years; these comments are based on my observations while teaching in that training program.) The major disadvantage for the trainer is that the students are distracted by what they consider "real" courses, the ones in their major, and their teaching duties. They find it difficult to put much time and energy into something that seems to them to be of less importance that their academic achievement. (Unfortunately, much of what they observe in the university community around them reinforces the idea that teaching is not of primary importance in the academy, that grades and research projects are the only things that really count.) At the same time, they are usually overwhelmed by the time involved in being a teaching assistant and that, added to their concern for their grades, means that the training program has last place in the ITAs' priorities. The second major disadvantage is for the ITAs. By the time they are in a training program offered concurrently, they have met their classes for the first time and have already made a bad impression. The implied contract is a negative one, as perceived by American undergraduates, and that negative impression is very difficult to change. And, in some cases, the training program is added on top of the full academic program of the ITA; that is, the departments do not see it as an important part of the students' load for that term and thus the students are forced into an overload situation–a full load of classes, teaching duties, and the training program. Such requirements often have a negative effect on all parts of the ITAs' performance.

Term-long Course Prior to Teaching

This is a course organized to last 10 to 15 weeks during the term preceding the ITAs' first teaching assignment. This configuration negates some of the disadvantages in the previous model and produces some advantages. For example, it provides adequate time to effect some changes in behavior and language before the ITAs have to meet a class for the first time. Thus there is the opportunity to avoid making a bad impression or projecting a negative implied contract on the first day of class. Shorter periods of time preclude effecting much change in pedagogical, cultural, or linguistic behavior.

The disadvantage of such a program is that it is costly. If the students have been awarded an assistantship but are not allowed to teach for the first term, then the institution must provide money for the assistantships while receiving no visible or immediate benefits (although the long-term benefits to the institution, in better teaching and reduced complaints, may be shown to outweigh the cost factor). Also, if ITAs must wait 10 to 15 weeks to apply the ideas and strategies presented to them in the training program, it may decrease their motivation.

Design Decisions

Which of the above types of programs a given institution should choose depends on a thorough analysis of the situation of that institution. That analysis will necessitate a careful look at the following:

1. What is the perceived problem? Often the perception of the problem does not match the reality, but if, in the minds of legislators, parents, and students, there is a problem, then it needs to be dealt with. This means determining both the nature of the problem and its severity. The nature of the problem refers to who considers it a problem–students, faculty, legislators, administrators, or parents? What is the severity of the problem? How pervasive are the complaints? Are they localized in one department, one discipline, or one course? Or are they spread throughout the institution? Is it possible to distinguish between complaints about ITAs and those about nonnative English-speaking faculty? The complaints, when traced, are often not about ITAs, but it seems to be more acceptable to complain about one's TA than one's professor.

2. What are the resources available within the institution? In terms of staff, for example, who has the expertise to design, administer, implement, and teach in an ITA program? If adequate staff are not available, what provisions can be made for adding the requisite positions? Similarly, are there adequate facilities? For example, during a regular term, will there be the necessary classrooms or lab space and time allocations? Most ITA training programs now use videotaped presentations for both screening and teaching purposes. Are there facilities for videotaping? Is there adequate budget to provide for the staff and facilities (plus any support budgets for such items as room and board, additional time for the international student advising office to work with ITAs in case of early arrivals, etc.)?

3. The institution needs to consider carefully the cooperation of all units within the institution. The training program will need the support of the academic departments; if they do not provide at least moral support, the training program's chances of success are minimal. Such support might come in the form of members of the academic department being involved in the review or certification committees, in providing the program staff with descriptions of the kinds of teaching assignments given to TAs in that department, and in helping to identify key vocabulary for specific courses.

Additional cooperation will be needed from the admissions office. If ITAs are required to be on campus early for a preterm orientation or course, it is vital that admissions be involved in the notification process so that the appropriate paperwork can be accomplished and the requisite documents made available to the ITAs early enough to ensure their ability to arrive on time.

Another unit with which the training program staff may need to seek cooperation is the graduate school. In the case of the University of Wyoming, for example, it is the Graduate School that awards the assistantships. They thereby become part of the enforcement for the required nature of the course and for the "policing" of the requirement, which is that *all* new international graduate assistants, regardless of their source of funding or their initial assignment, must attend the three-week concentrated session just prior to the opening of the autumn semester, and all those who are to teach must be certified before they will be allowed to teach. The Graduate School's involvement in the enforcement carries far more weight with other units than would similar notification from the English department, in which the training program is housed.

This raises the issue of politics within the institution, an issue that cannot be ignored. Other units that need to be included will depend on the political situation within the institution. Analyzing that situation is vital to the health of an ITA training program. Some possible units to consider are housing, food service, the international advising office, graduate student association, student government body, etc.

4. An important decision that must be made is whether to make attendance at the training program recommended or required. That decision may be primarily a political one, which must be made within the context of the support and cooperation that can be engendered from other units. If I were beginning a program, as the administrator of the ITA program I would want recommended attendance to begin with, until such time as the program can demonstrate its effectiveness and thereby gain the support of other units. Only then would I want the question of required attendance raised. At the University of Wyoming, this is exactly what happened; we offered the course for three years during which the Graduate School recommended the course (and certain departments required it for some students). It was not until we had established our validity as a program that the Council of Deans decided to require it. If a program is to be required, that decision and announcement needs to come from the highest possible level within the institution.

5. There is also the major question of an exit procedure from the training program. Will that procedure involve a recommendation from the training program staff about the type of assignments the ITAs should undertake, or will there be a certification process–that is, without certification the graduate assistant will not be able to teach? Again, if I were establishing a new program, I would suggest having a recommendation system first, to be followed later by certification with some process involving faculty from the academic departments. However, some institutions are not given the luxury of making that decision; outside forces, i.e., legislatures or boards of regents, have mandated testing and certification programs (some without also making provisions for training). In these cases, the need for cooperation from other units, particularly academic departments, is vital.

Design Elements

Once the institution has determined the type and timing of the program to be offered, it must deal with important procedural matters. To begin with, there must be *procedures for notification of students*. Again, using the University of Wyoming as an example, within the procedures for admitting, awarding assistantships, and notifying students, every potential international graduate assistant is told at five different points about the training program and that attendance is required at the program, which is offered during the month of August. The built-in redundancy was effected in hopes that no potential international graduate assistant could fail to see at least one of the notifications.

There needs to be a *screening process*. Some schools are using the Test of Spoken English (TSE) from Educational Testing Service as a prearrival screening for either admission or awarding of assistantships. Most schools also find that they need additional screening on campus. Some use SPEAK, which is the institutional version of the TSE. Many, including the University of Wyoming, are using their own screening devices. Decisions about screening must involve what kinds of information are needed (for example, listening comprehension, fluency, comprehensibility), which devices can elicit that information (paper and pencil tests, videotaped minilectures), and who will do the screening (ESL staff often, but some of the more successful programs use faculty from the academic departments and undergraduate students as well).

Decisions of *syllabus design* will be dictated in some part by decisions about the type of program to be offered and the availability of staff and facilities. Most ITA training programs involve three components: cross-cultural awareness and communication, pedagogy, and language. The particular mix of the components will depend on the perceived needs, the length of the program, and the qualifications of the training staff. In the case of our program, for example, about 50% of the course focuses on cross-cultural awareness and communication skills, including some pedagogical communication skills; about 25% is pedagogy, and the other 25% language (that instruction is individualized according the needs of each student). Since the perception on our campus is that the problem is "poor English skills," we have designed each component so that it involves English skills. For example, pedagogy is presented within the context of language routines. Thus we are able to provide the type of instruction that we know the ITAs need while at the same time satisfying the campus at large that we are treating the problem as they perceive it.

Equally important will be the decision about *exit evaluation*. Who will make that evaluation? How will it be used–as an advisory process or as certification? At UW, we now have certification that also includes a seven-level recommendation for which kinds of teaching situations a student is capable of handling. We have developed the seven levels, which range from "Could work in a lab situation only if carefully and closely supervised" to "Should be able to undertake any tasks normally given to TAs in your department," in concert with the academic departments.

One major and often unpleasant factor that must be included in this discussion is the problem of *enforcement*. If there is a required training program, if there is a certification process, it is imperative that there be effective enforcement procedures. Such enforcement may be needed at several different points: the awarding of assistantships (the student may lose an assistantship for failure to attend the training program) through the assignment of teaching duties (ITAs certified for limited duties may not be assigned others). The particular mode of enforcement should again reflect the cooperation of the other units and also the political climate within the institution. To use another example from UW, the Graduate School has the enforcement duties, since it awards the assistantships. But one dean added to that by requiring departments to return to him any assistantships lost because of a student's failure to arrive in time for the training program. (Needless to say, all students arrived on time).

Last, but certainly not least, is the problem of *budget*. No training program is free. Although I believe that the costs of the training program are offset by improved undergraduate satisfaction, or at least by reduced negativity, it is difficult to prove that kind of gain. Some unit must be responsible for the budget, and the budget must include not only staff time for teaching but also facilities and equipment; it may also need to include housing costs, food costs, materials for classes, etc.

Staffing Patterns

In determining who will provide the training program for ITAs, there are three groups of faculty and staff on most campuses from whom to draw the instructional personnel:

1. English as a Second Language (ESL) faculty: These teachers bring to the training program the advantage of having knowledge about language, language use, and the teaching of language. They also usually have good cross-cultural communication skills; that is, they are already prepared to talk with the international TAs about the appropriate use of English.[3] However, many ESL faculty are not in contact with American undergraduates on a regular basis; they do not know how undergraduate courses are conducted, even within their own institution, since they have taught only ESL classes and students. They also may not be cognizant of what I have termed "academic subcultures"–that is, the various disciplines within academia that have different expectations for how to teach (whether to use overheads, lecture, encourage discussion).[4]

2. Faculty development staff: Many universities have faculty development programs available. Their staffs know about American undergraduates and their expectations; they should also be able to identify methods and tactics that are effective for teaching the undergraduates in their institution.[5] They may or may not be aware of academic subculture differences. They often have had no training in cross-cultural communication or in the teaching of language.

3. Education faculty: These faculty should be aware of the expectations of undergraduates within their institution and have knowledge about teaching methods and techniques. They often have no understanding of academic subcultures within postsecondary education, however, and most of them have had little or no training in cross-cultural communication or in the teaching of language.

Some programs have found that using a mixed staffing pattern not only provides all the requisite kinds of teaching and information for the ITA program but also has resulted in staff and faculty development for those from different areas who find themselves working together, often for the first time in the history of the institution.

Program Content and Focus

Decisions about program content must take into account the areas mentioned above as well as consideration of the politics of the institution and its available resources. Programs usually have one of the following as a focus.

Language Focus

Most complaints about international TAs focus on language. "His English isn't any good." If the problem is perceived to be primarily language, then certainly a language component should be highlighted in the organization of the training program (whether it is the major focus of the program or not). The language component should include listening comprehension as well as accent reduction and use of appropriate structures and vocabulary. The most efficient way to effect change in the language use of the ITA may be by individualizing instruction in this area.

Pedagogical Focus

This focus of the program should, in my view, provide two types of information: (a) an explanation and understanding of the educational philosophy and system in this country, specifically as it applies to the institution in question (for example, the University of Wyoming is an open-door institution, the only four-year school in a state that has no statewide high school graduation requirements; thus our undergraduates come to us with a wide variety of educational backgrounds but fairly homogeneous social and cultural backgrounds); (b) some teaching techniques, such as the appropriate use of the blackboard or other audiovisual techniques used in different academic subcultures; ways of clarifying the questions that American undergraduates ask because they have been taught that asking questions is not only accepted but expected; making assignments in ways that students will recognize them as assignments, not just suggestions.

Cross-cultural Communication Focus

In this area, attention will need to be given to such subjects as nonverbal communication and gestures. This focus should be reinforced in the other areas. The communication most important in this part of the training program will be that connected with serving in a teaching capacity, which would include not only classroom communication but also such communication tasks as holding office hours and dealing with student complaints.

While any of these may provide a major focus for the training program, an ideal program, in my view, would have a combination of the above, with the ratio to be determined by the design factors–that is, the political, economic, and pedagogical factors–that have been ascertained through a thorough analysis of the institution.

Conclusion

I am often asked for "the program" for training international teaching assistants. In my view, there is no such program. Each institution must determine, based on an objective and complete self-analysis, what kind of program will most effectively meet the needs, both real and perceived, of that institution and its students and, not to be forgotten, the needs of the international teaching assistant.

Notes

[1] The reasons that have precipitated such interest in these programs will not be explored in this article, but may be discerned from reading both the professional and popular press, i.e., *The Chronicle of Higher Education, The Wall Street Journal*, and *Newsweek*.

[2] This philosophy is reflected in a forthcoming textbook to be published by Macmillan and written by Patricia Byrd, Georgia State University; Martha Pennington, University of Hawaii; and Janet C. Constantinides, University of Wyoming.

[3] In some cases, ESL teachers may need more in the area of cross-cultural awareness. One source for such information, with immediate applications to the ESL classroom, is *Teaching across Cultures in the University ESL Program*, edited by Patricia Byrd (Washington, DC: National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, 1986).

[4] This is an area in which research is needed. Some is currently being undertaken, including a project that Patricia Byrd, Georgia State University, and I have started, discourse analysis of introductory-level math classes.

[5] Institutions, like societies, have different cultures. It is imperative for staff in the ITA training program to be fully cognizant of the culture of their institution in order to help ITAs operate in it appropriately.

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Janet C. Constantinides is Assistant Chair of the Department of English at the University of Wyoming.

Curriculum Considerations for a Campus-Wide International Teaching Associate Training Program

Katharine S. Schneider and Scott G. Stevens

The University of Delaware's international teaching associate (ITA) program was not mandated by legislative action. In January 1984, there were no angry demonstrations by undergraduate students, no embarrassing headlines about the "foreign TA problem" in the newspaper, and no scathing letters from irate parents to the board of trustees. Delaware did, however, have a problem; our undergraduates were just beginning to express their displeasure over the use of ITAs in the classroom—ITAs who were perceived as lacking sufficient English language proficiency. Although Delaware was spared public embarrassment, other universities were not, a fact that made administrators and faculty there quite sensitive to the issue and favorably disposed to the creation of an ITA training program.

The task of designing a program and its curriculum was given to the English Language Institute (ELI). To structure that program effectively planners had to consider several major questions regarding curriculum design, content, and evaluation/assessment. In addressing these questions in this paper we hope to provide some guidelines and ideas for other ITA trainers as they plan or redesign intensive ITA programs, and second, to provide in the University of Delaware example one response to the questions. It must be emphasized that answers to each of these questions will no doubt be specific and appropriate to particular institutions.

Design Considerations

Time constraints and opportunities will have a great impact on whatever curriculum will emerge in an ITA training program. Planners who would like their programs to run for a semester or year might first consider whether such training should coincide with the ITAs' first teaching experience, i.e., on-the-job training, or whether the ITAs should be trained prior to entering the classroom. The latter option raises the question of whether departments can afford to reassign all first-year ITAs to noninstructional duties (grading, research, etc.) during the training period. Given student demographics in many university departments (e.g., over 50% of engineering graduate students nationwide are foreign-born), it might not be possible to find a sufficient number of TAs who are native speakers of English to cover undergraduate classes previously instructed by ITAs. Universities confronted by such problems might want to consider a presemester training program in the late summer. This is the direction the University of Delaware took.

There are also important pedagogical reasons for creating a summer training program. An intensive training session prior to the start of the autumn semester would mean that those in training would be undistracted by course and departmental commitments.

Any ESL instructor who has ever tried to convince an international student that his English instruction is as important as his credit coursework knows the futility of such argument. For an international student burdened with a substantial course load, ESL classes and assignments seem somehow less real—certainly less pressing. A late summer program is a practical option also because it is difficult to bring the ITAs to campus much earlier. Many universities in other countries do not conclude academic years until late July, and many graduate departments often delay admissions decisions until midsummer. There is also the question of fairness. The practice of bringing culture-shocked ITAs to campus sometime around Labor Day with the expectation that they teach three days later is cruel and unusual punishment. In addition to formal training, the presemester summer program gives ITAs a chance to adjust to their new surroundings, become oriented to the university and their departments, get acquainted with colleagues, and find housing. In the first two years of the program at the University of Delaware, when participation was purely voluntary, roughly 86% of the invitations were accepted by ITAs who were relieved that some assistance was being provided to help them make the transition from student to teacher, from their country to ours.

In opting for a presemester summer program, planners must ask whether sufficient linguistic improvement can be made by ITAs during this time. At Delaware we decided to design an intensive program in terms of total hours. The 1985 program was three-and-a-half-weeks long, with approximately 125 hours of training. After the first year, the program was extended to four-and-a-half weeks to provide more time to address language deficiencies. Although fossilized pronunciation errors could not be overcome in a month of training, ITAs could make significant progress with their spoken English and also master compensatory strategies. The 1986 session provided over 140 hours of training, including 40 hours of private language tutoring for each ITA. Over the two years of the program, 80% of the participants were able to qualify for instructional duties.

A second major consideration in planning an ITA program is the question of funding. A lack of sufficient funding might preclude lengthy training programs. An abbreviated program would necessitate limits in curriculum objectives, e.g., a three-day orientation program cannot even begin to address the pronunciation errors of the ITAs. Clearly any training program that effectively addresses the needs of ITAs will require a commitment of adequate funding. If, for example, a university requires ITAs to arrive prior to the autumn semester for summer training, then a stipend seems appropriate. From the start, the University of Delaware regarded its ITA program in terms of faculty development, not remediation, and funded its summer ITAs at a level equal to that provided during the regular academic year. This sent a clear message of support to the students, who responded with enthusiasm and hard work throughout the training program.

Third, designers of ITA training programs must decide whom to involve in the curriculum. The multiple needs of the ITA, which are of a cultural, pedagogical, and linguistic nature, provide compelling evidence for interdepartmental support. On the other hand, the spreading of responsibility among several departments might weaken accountability and create difficult coordination and logistical problems. At the University of Delaware, the ELI assumes fundamental responsibility for its training program, but it does not presume to hold all the resources an ITA will need to access. For example, since language support beyond the classroom is crucial for ITAs in need of further English improvement, the university's International Center give these students priority in placement with host and homestay American families. The Center for Teaching Effectiveness and the Office of Instructional Technology provide some training in pedagogical matters as well as a team of technicians to videotape the participants on a daily basis. Finally, student organizations are invited to participate in the program, both to provide a realistic classroom atmosphere and to become better informed about the quality of ITAs and the training they receive. The success of Delaware's program has been the result of such interdepartmental support.

Testing and Placement

Prescreening applicants for teaching assistant positions is problematic for most universities. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), which is used to confirm proficiency in reading, grammar, and listening, provides no measure of oral proficiency. Although many graduate departments ask their applicants to apply for the Test of Spoken English (TSE), this test continues to be inaccessible for many international students around the world. Some graduate committees have had limited success screening TA applicants with international telephone interviews, but this is an imperfect procedure at best.

At Delaware, the summer training served as an alternative to overseas prescreening of oral proficiency. Designers of Delaware's program decided to make use of the SPEAK, the institutional version of the TSE, to assess the oral proficiency of the ITAs upon their arrival in late July for summer training. A score of 250 and above was set as the minimum to qualify an ITA for instructional duties. ITAs who scored below 200 on the test could be expected not to be ready for such duties even after a month of training. ITAs with scores of 200 to 249 were to be retested at the conclusion of the program. With this early assessment, departments could be notified over a month prior to the autumn semester of the likely eligibility of each ITA. This information gave departments time to react and find classroom replacements where necessary.

It should be noted that, regardless of the SPEAK score, no Delaware ITA would be in danger of losing his or her funding. The program provided for financial support throughout the autumn semester in the unlikely event that a department could not provide an alternate assignment (as a research assistant or grader) for an ITA disqualified from instructional duties. University officials felt that a department's asking a student to travel thousands of miles to pursue graduate studies created an obligation for that student's financial support.

Content Considerations

When planning content, curriculum designers will have to consider not only the length of the program, but also whether to include teaching skills and cultural orientation in addition to linguistic training. To a great extent linguistic and paralinguistic demands on the ITAs cannot be extricated from pedagogical and cultural needs. Clear pronunciation is not the only requirement of an ITA. In the classroom and in office hours the ITA must understand the language (slang and regional accents) of the students, and nonverbal feedback (eye contact, facial expressions, body posture, and gestures) that native speakers unconsciously recognize and process. To make themselves understood ITAs will need to organize their presentations, make word choices appropriate for the student audience, and use visual aids (blackboard, handouts, and overheads) effectively. Thus many of an

ITAs' language needs are logically best addressed within the context of classroom culture and pedagogy.

Determining which linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural aspects to include in curriculum and how to balance these is a major task for program planners. Linguistic training includes not only remediation—correcting pronunciation, stress, and intonation errors that interfere with comprehensibility—but also development of language appropriate for the classroom and teacher-student interaction. Which aspects of pedagogy—those particular to a discipline or those of a more general nature—to include depend on whether the program is departmental or university wide. ESL teachers will not, of course, be able to tell ITAs how to teach physics or math. There are, however, important cross disciplinary pedagogical skills, such as techniques of good questioning, classroom management, and effective tutoring that should be included in an ITA program curriculum. Since American university classes in general are more interactive than those in other countries, the ITA often lacks skills for developing effective instructor-student interaction. Thus, the aim of the cultural orientation component of an ITA program curriculum must be to sensitize the ITAs to the expectations of the American university student and to the behavioral norms of the university classroom.

The University of Delaware Curriculum

Because of the variety of language backgrounds and previous spoken English training of the ITAs, program designers at Delaware decided that the remedial linguistic instruction would best be handled through one-on-one tutoring sessions focusing on individual ITAs' linguistic problems. Instruction for the development of appropriate language for the classroom would be handled in formal class sessions along with a cultural orientation to the American classroom and basic pedagogy.

To provide the ITAs with enough feedback to modify language and those behaviors that would not be well received by undergraduates, we decided to contextualize all instruction in language, culture, and pedagogy in micro- or practice-teaching exercises to be videotaped and critiqued, and in some instances retaped and critiqued. We focused on four linguistic pedagogical skill areas—making oral explanations; asking and answering questions and concluding discussions; tutoring/conferencing techniques; and establishing rapport in the classroom—and devoted one week to each. All linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical instruction and activities were subsumed under one of these four areas, and the order of presentation led the ITAs from the least interactive to the most interactive skills.

In a typical week, the skill basics are introduced on Monday. The videotaping is done on Tuesday, with in-class and individual critiquing Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday. The session is refilmed on Thursday, with critiques Thursday afternoon, and a wrap-up on Friday. The video assignments are:

Week one: Five- to seven-minute presentations by the ITAs relating two concepts or problems in their fields of study to audiences of beginning students who have only a very general understanding of the field;

Week two: Five- to seven- minute lessons or laboratory demonstrations by the ITAs in which they ask students questions and try to promote discussion. The audiences are assumed to be groups of beginning students whom the TAs have been teaching for about five weeks;

Week three: Two tutoring sessions, one in which the ITAs guide a student through a content problem, and one in which the ITAs handle a student complaint or problem with the course;

Week four: A "first day of class," in which the ITAs introduce themselves and the course and attempt to establish rapport.

The ITAs themselves are expected to participate in the assessment of their own tapes as well as those of the others and to correct their performances in the refilmings.

Critiques are based on a checklist of skills—linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical—that relate to the "skill" focus area of the week. For asking and answering questions and conducting discussions, the checklist asks viewers to evaluate: (a) linguistic skills such as pronunciation and fluency, paraphrasing, and listening (particular attention is given to intonation and stress, since research indicates these to be the greatest barriers to comprehensibility); (b) questioning techniques such as allowing sufficient wait time and patiently handling incorrect responses; (c) the pattern, phrasing, difficulty, and types of questions in terms of the material being taught; (d) nonverbal behavior such as positive gestures and a smiling friendly manner; and (e) compensating skills such as using handouts and/or the blackboard for important information and difficult-to-pronounce terms and paraphrasing student questions to verify that the ITA has understood them.

Linguistic, paralinguistic, cultural, pedagogical, and compensating skills related to the microteaching exercises are taught in a variety of activities. Some material is presented through instructor explanation and demonstration. A large part of the cultural orientation material is given by outside presenters. The dean of students, for example, gives a session on student rights and recognizing and handling problem students. The dean of admissions speaks on the academic background and preparation of Delaware students. Experienced ITAs also present a session giving their first-year experience and observations. Rehearsals for the video sessions are often done through scenario or role playing exercises. For example, an ITA/student presents the ITA/teacher with a problem to handle such as responding to the following excuse: "My family doesn't have enough money to send me to college. I work nights at McDonalds and just don't have enough time to study. That's why I am failing the course." ITAs also visit ongoing summer session classes in their departments and observe specific student/instructor behavior, such as the skills used by the instructor to maintain rapport, student time of arrival in class and behavior, or the instructor's classroom management techniques. Finally, the Institute is fortunate to have a number of films of University of Delaware classes and instructional training films to use.

Although microteaching provides the ITAs with instructional experience, designers of ITA programs who believe in contextualized linguistic training often find many of these microteaching exercises somewhat artificial, because the presence of other ITAs does not constitute a real audience. In order to add more "realism" to these sessions we added American undergraduates to the "class" for the teaching sessions in the 1986 program. They act the role of the typical student. They are encouraged and often prompted to ask the ITA questions about the content of the lesson and other unexpected apparently nonquestions, such as, "All copies of the text have been sold, and I can't find a used copy. The quiz is next Tuesday." The Americans also assist in the critiques, offering their observations of what behaviors and linguistic problems might create difficulties in the classroom. They are paid for their service and perform with a great deal of enthusiasm and imagination.

Assessment Considerations

Assessing ITA progress and the curriculum used to train them is as difficult as it is important. A growing number of universities have become dissatisfied with using the SPEAK or TSE as the sole barometer of an ITAs' readiness for classroom duties. These tests are not designed to evaluate effective teaching, only general oral proficiency. An ITA who might be considered marginal by SPEAK standards, say 235, might have sufficient mastery of compensating skills and effective pedagogy to perform extremely well in the classroom. Moreover, high scores on the SPEAK may not guarantee culturally appropriate and instructionally effective performance in class. Thus at Delaware we supplement posttraining (exit) SPEAK scores with an analysis of each ITA's final videotaped microteaching session and with assessments from tutors of their linguistic progress. When combined with the SPEAK, this additional information provides a very accurate assessment of classroom readiness. This three-part evaluation is forwarded to the departments in time for last minute changes in TAs' assignments where necessary.

ITAs who fail to pass the SPEAK at the end of the program and who are not recommended for instructional responsibilities are enrolled in a fall tutoring program that focuses primarily on language improvement. During this time they are funded and free to enroll in their graduate courses. Four hours of tutoring are scheduled weekly. These TAs are then retested in December with the SPEAK and a videotaped microteaching exercise, and final recommendations are forwarded to the department. For departments with new ITAs arriving for spring semester duties, an abbreviated program is offered during January with follow-up tutoring during the spring.

The effectiveness of an ITA program and curriculum cannot be measured solely by exit scores and performances of the participants. ITA program administrators must also evaluate the curriculum in terms of whether it has correctly anticipated and effectively addressed the kinds of problems ITAs will encounter in the classroom. To this end program personnel at Delaware administered an evaluation of the program and its components to the ITAs at the close of the program and again at the end of the first semester. This tool has provided valuable feedback and has been instrumental in initiating successful changes in the program and the curriculum design from the first to the second year. We have also polled departments to gather their views on the usefulness of the program. This latter evaluation helped us to improve the curriculum and has generated departmental support for the program.

Designing a workable and useful ITA program is an involved process in which planners must consider linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural questions within the context of institutional realities. The University of Delaware's program is a result of such a process. An effective ITA program is also one that continues to evolve as additional curricular and institutional needs and considerations develop. Only through ongoing assessment and evaluation will these needs and considerations become evident. We hope that in providing our thoughts on the design of an ITA curriculum and a brief description of the Delaware program we can assist those who want to establish new programs or revise existing ones.

Katharine S. Schneider is Program Coordinator of the Graduate Teaching Assistant Training Program, and Scott G. Stevens is Director of the English Language Institute at the University of Delaware.

Intercultural Communication for International Teaching Assistants: Observations on Theory, Pedagogy, and Research

Magdalena Costantino

Introduction

The number of international students, instructors, and scholars on United States campuses has been increasing rather steadily. Although 1985 brought a certain leveling off in the increase (Open Doors, 1985), the previous three to four years made it possible for the Institute of International Education to predict that by 1990 one out of every four graduate students attending United States universities would be from outside the country (Open Doors, 1982).

Many universities with graduate programs rely on their international students to teach undergraduate courses. The teaching duties are often assigned to the international graduate teaching assistants (ITAs) based on their knowledge of the content area or on other departmental considerations. The ITAs' effectiveness in communicating the subject matter to students who are of different sociocultural backgrounds often remains overlooked. Consequently, many institutions have been faced with serious criticism of the quality of their undergraduate instruction. This issue, known as "the foreign TA problem," has been dealt with at many different levels, including state legislatures, university senate committees, scholars, teachers, and researchers (Mestenhauser et al., 1980; Paige, 1983; Bailey, 1984; Ard and Swales, 1986).

Purpose

This paper will describe how the "foreign TA problem" was addressed at The Pennsylvania State University. Following a short background note, a theoretical rationale for the intercultural communication module of the Penn State training project will be developed.

The Problem and Its Setting

In April 1981, The Pennsylvania State University Senate passed legislation with regard to the quality of teaching provided by graduate teaching assistants. In addition to the training that had to be provided for all TAs responsible for instruction, the ITAs were required to undergo a proficiency test of spoken English. The Center for English as a Second Language was mandated to test the oral communicative proficiency of all prospective ITAs, as well as provide a specialized training program for those whose proficiency was determined to be below the desired standard. As a result of this legislation, a sequential three-semester training program designed to help the potential international TAs overcome their linguistic and cultural difficulties and thus increase their communication effectiveness was developed.

When we talk about an increase in the communication effectiveness of the ITAs, we mean an increase in the degree to which the meaning as created by both the American students and the ITAs is mutually and accurately shared (Brummett et al., 1984; Tubbs & Moss, 1977).

The training program at The Pennsylvania State University consists of the following five instructional modules: (a) phonological, (b) listening comprehension, (c) rhetorical organization, (d) presentation skills, and (e) intercultural communication. Hence, the course has five interim goals, to: (a) increase the students' speaking intelligibility; (b) improve the students' listening comprehension; (c) increase the students' ability to organize material into rhetorical patterns for effective development of concepts; (d) teach presentation skills necessary to classroom instruction; and (e) provide information about American cultural traits as they pertain to intercultural communication in the classroom. Following the basic premise that the program is a course in English for special purposes (Jenkins, 1984), the specialized context for which the training is provided is the American university classroom.

The entire process focuses on the development of teacher communication competencies, such as verbal interaction, listening and responding, methods of inquiry, interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, nonverbal communication, classroom dynamics, etc. (Lynn, 1976).

Different aspects of Penn State University's training program for potential ITAs are described elsewhere (see Costantino, 1985). In this paper, the intercultural communication module will be dealt with in detail.

Theoretical Considerations

It was mentioned earlier that the purpose of developing the training program at Penn State was to increase the ITAs' communication effectiveness in the classroom. In his description of the TA training program at the University of Minnesota, Mestenhauser (1980) stated that successful communication between the American students and their TAs from different sociocultural backgrounds depended on both the linguistic skills of ITAs and their ability to communicate their message in a way that was culturally appropriate to the American students (Mestenhauser et al., 1980). In other words, the program has to focus on different aspects of the process of communicating across different cultures.

The following is a brief description of the most important theoretical considerations that were taken into account during the development of the training program at the The Pennsylvania State University. First, Schramm's and Berlo's communication models, which were selected as most appropriate, will be discussed. This will be followed by a short definition of intercultural communication.

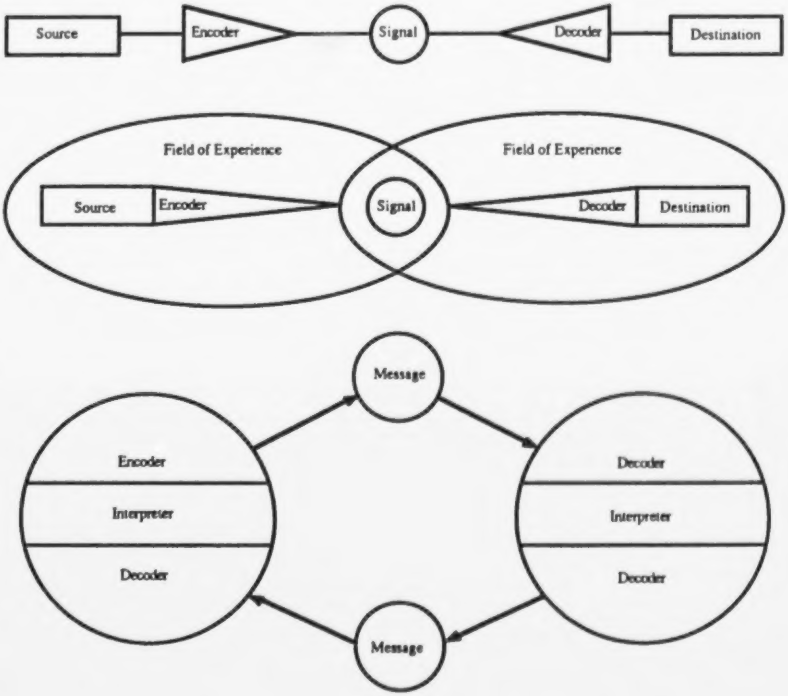
Schramm's Models of Communication

Schramm's (1954) models of communication take into account the background or culture of the participants. According to Schramm's explanation, people can encode and decode messages according to their experiences only. The greater the overlap of experiences, the greater the possibility of reaching a shared meaning. Schramm labels the participants in a communication process as "interpreters" (see Figure 1).

308

Figure 1

Schramm's Model of Communication


Source
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Signal
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Destination
Field of Experience
Field of Experience
Source
Encoder
Signal
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Destination
Message
Encoder
Interpreter
Decoder
Decoder
Interpreter
Decoder
Message

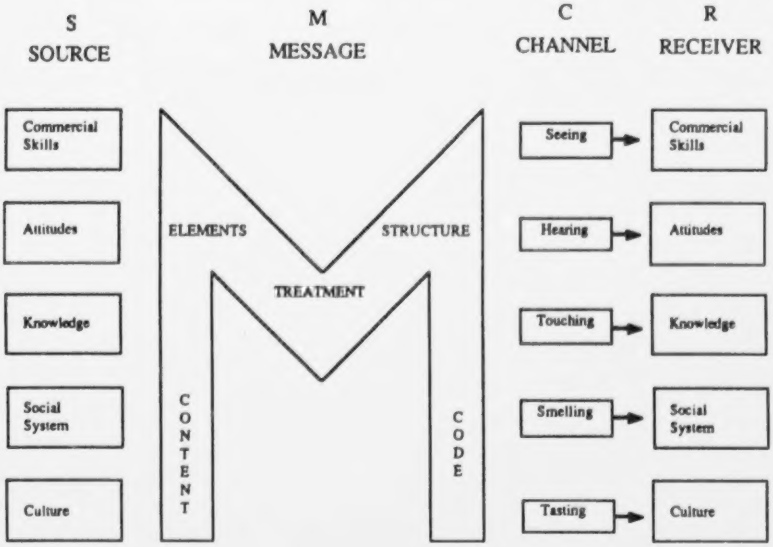
Wilber Schramm. 1955. How communication works. In Wilber Schramm (Ed.), *The process and effects of mass communication.* Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press: 4-8

Berlo's Model of Communication

A perspective similar to Schramm's is set forth in Berlo's model of communication. This is presented in Figure 2. As can be seen in the model, the following basic components are presented: the source, the message, the channel, and the receiver. These four components are essential for physical transmission and reception, i.e., exchange of the message through a channel. However, the actual variables within each component are a combination of a variety of factors. Therefore, according to this model both the speaker and the listener (i.e., source and receiver) bring with them into each communication exchange these four essential elements: their culture, attitudes, knowledge, and awareness of a social system. The actual variables within each element are specific to each participant since they evolved out of the participants' previous experience. Hence, the speaker and the listener enter into each communication situation with their own sets of implicit assumptions about the world or their tacit theory of the world (Kay, 1970).

Figure 2

Berlo's Model of Communication (Adaptation)


S
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Social System
Culture
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STRUCTURE
TREATMENT
CONTENT
CODE
Seeing
Hearing
Touching
Smelling
Tasting
Commercial Skills
Attitudes
Knowledge
Social System
Culture

David K. Berlo. 1960. The process of communication. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.: 72.

Intercultural Communication

From among the numerous descriptions of intercultural communication, Szalay's definition was selected as most relevant. According to Szalay (1981), intercultural communication is an interaction process between representational systems, or the intrinsic characteristics of the code system, that are being exchanged by the communicators. Szalay continues that "genuine human communication is inconceivable without genuine understanding, and progress in human understanding comes through familiarity with people's background, their cultural views and dispositions" (Szalay, 1981, p. 133). Therefore, in an act of communication between a speaker and a listener from different sociocultural backgrounds, it is reasonable to anticipate different perspectives and different interpretations of the message exchanged. These different interpretations stem from the participants' frame of reference and the relationship of the subjective meanings that the communicators attach to a particular message (Szalay, 1981, p. 136).

A number of researchers have focused on the study of the "subjective meanings" and their inseparable role in the process of communication. Miller (1967), Osgood (1957), and Triandis (1971) all agree that the meanings at issue here are not the meanings given in dictionaries, but psychological meanings that evolved out of persons' actual perception and evaluation of a particular subject (Osgood, 1957).

In order to increase the effectiveness of the communication process, one must try to achieve as high a degree as possible of commonality in the participants' interpretations of the subject meaning. The degree of correspondence of the meaning mutually shared by the participants depends on the ratio between the meaning as perceived by the receiver and the meaning as perceived by the initiator (Tubbs and Moss, 1975).

Implications for teaching. Professionals in intercultural communication attempt to understand the communication process and identify those variables that either augment or hamper intercultural understanding. An accurate perception and interpretation of the message is the goal of a successful communication act. Therefore, a program that intends to increase the communication effectiveness of the participants must pay attention not only to the linguistic form and rhetorical organization of the message, but also to the characteristics of the interpreters, i.e., speakers and listeners. In our particular case, we are dealing with a primarily homogeneous group of American undergraduate students and a heterogeneous group of international graduate teaching assistants. Naturally, one can expect differences in the subjective meanings, personal perceptions, and interpretations among all the participants.

The following is a list of cultural variables viewed as fundamental to an intercultural understanding in an American undergraduate classroom. This list was compiled during the development of the training program at The Pennsylvania State University and was based on our observations and informal surveys. Although it is "Penn State culture specific," it can be adapted to any institution of higher education.

Intercultural variables in the classroom are:

1. TA's attitude to his or her students in general;
2. TA's attitude to the students at a land-grant university such as Penn State;
3. TA's awareness of the rules and policy regulations with respect to the students' rights and responsibilities; and
4. TA's awareness of the rules and policy regulations with respect to the TA's rights and responsibilities.

A sequence of activities, described below, was proposed for the intercultural module of the training program.

The TAs' attitudes toward their students. As indicated in the list of intercultural variables, the first two variables selected pertain to the attitudes of international TAs regarding their American students. The importance of teacher attitudes on the classroom interactions and performance of the students is well documented in literature, both in general as well as in intercultural settings (see works of Gardner, 1968; and Gardner and Lambert, 1972), and, therefore, will not be analyzed in this paper. In reference to our particular program, the attitudes of the ITAs as listeners as well as speakers are judged to play an important role in their function as instructors. This is so because the communication process takes place not only between speakers of different languages, but also between interpreters of different psychological makeup, as established by Schramm's and Berlo's models. In addition, we believe that there are further important cultural differences stemming from the participants' different perceptions of the environment, i.e., the classroom and the constraints that this environment places on communication. For further discussion on these issues, see Condon and Yousef, 1978.

To determine how the ITAs perceive their audience, i.e., American students in general and the undergraduates at Penn State in particular, we conducted an informal survey of the TAs' perceptions of the undergraduates. The survey, administered at the beginning of the training program, was conducted for four consecutive semesters. When the international TAs were asked their perceptions of their students, the following traits were frequently mentioned: arrogant, self-centered, overly self-confident, opinionated, uninterested in being taught, showing off, rude, and disrespectful. The undergraduates at a land-grant university like Penn State were described by TAs as not too bright, interested only in having a good time, stupid, interested only in grades, rich, and lazy.

In order to understand their audience better and thus hopefully improve their perceptions of the undergraduates, prospective TAs are asked to read a number of articles dealing with the philosophy, organization, principles, and structure of the American educational system. Special attention is paid to the educational philosophy of higher education in the United States. A short course in comparative education follows. For instance, the ITAs summarize their perceptions of American education based on the assigned readings, personal observations, and discussions with other students. Differences as well as similarities, causes as well as consequences of certain education policies are compared cross-culturally and then discussed in their American context. Two American values, self-expression and independence, always become the focal points of long discussions among the TAs. Many of them feel, especially during their first months in the United States, that asking questions is a rude interruption and a show of disrespect on the part of the student. Others find the interactive teaching mode that is typical for this country very uncomfortable, and prefer straightforward lecturing without any student feedback. There are those who simply reject the idea of mass education and believe in the worth of the elitist and competitive educational systems of the European or Asian traditions.

The international students are not forced to reject their beliefs and replace them with the philosophical principles of the host country. Yet, in order to be more effective in the classroom, it is important that they begin to understand that asking questions during a lecture is not meant to be rude and arrogant behavior, but an attempt to improve one's understanding of the material being taught; that the teacher and the students are expected to act as more or less equal in a quasi-informal educational setting; that discussion, sharing of opinions, and interactive teacher/student involvement are viewed as an asset and not as a disruption of order; and that respect for the teacher is earned, rather than given automatically.

The readings are also used to introduce the concept of mass education as opposed to the selective elitist systems of many other countries. Gradually the potential TAs become familiar with the American definition of democracy and how this concept is carried out throughout the American educational process.

It was established earlier that it is reasonable to expect a higher degree of correspondence in the perception of the meaning of a message if the participants' prior experiences are similar in nature. Therefore, in addition to the reading assignments, the international students are also given four or five communication/observation tasks each semester. The purpose of the assignments is to gather more first-hand experience and information about unfamiliar concepts, and thus build the content schema necessary for effective communication (Schallert, 1982, pp. 13-48). The communication/observation tasks are judged as one of the experiential tools intended to provide the students with new insights and understanding of their new environments. Following are examples of possible assignments:

1. One or two observations of an undergraduate or graduate lecture where the focus is the student/teacher interaction in terms of academic and personal involvement, appearance, etc. Different instructional styles are defined. The observations are subsequently discussed in comparative terms.
2. A short visit to the university day-care center where the principal objectives of early childhood education (i.e., independence, self-reliance, and positive reinforcement) are at work.
3. A visit to the Academic Assistance Program Office, the Developmental Year Program Office, or the Honors Program Office to discuss the educational principles and philosophies that characterize these programs.
4. Visits to the Office of Student Affairs in order to get information about financial aid, human relations training, student government and programs, leadership training, placement policies, etc.
5. Interviews with two or three undergraduates on and off campus to find out how "typical" students live, think, and pay for their education.

The usual format of the communication/observation task calls for:

1. One or two visits to selected classrooms or offices on or off campus;
2. A short overview of the topic for which the students are seeking additional information; and
3. A list of questions that the students are required to ask, for example: Why did you come to Penn State? What was your high school like? How do you pay for your education? What is the function of your office? What is the Academic Assistance Program? Who are the students in the Honors Program?

Each and every one of the communication tasks has a general purpose, which is to increase the international students' awareness and understanding of their audience and their culture. The communication tasks also provide the international students with badly needed opportunities to communicate with native speakers in order to practice listening comprehension and communication skills. In order to achieve these goals, the tasks are often in the form of an interview.

Every communication/observation task is thoroughly discussed in class, often on camera. The discussions are structured so as to provide the international students with practice in leading a small-group discussion. Effective questioning, information processing, getting to the point, and substantiating one's opinion are some of the techniques of interpersonal communication that are taught and practiced.

The international students enjoy these activities. They find the information interesting and very often surprising. The comments on their evaluations are usually very positive.

The TAs' knowledge of university policies. Items three and four of our list of pertinent intercultural communication variables relate to specific university policies and regulations. In order to inform the students about this area, a number of approaches are used. For instance, the student handbook is consulted and pertinent points, such as the university attendance policy, departmental grading policy, exams, quizzes and conflicts, late papers and reports, etc., are discussed. The would-be TAs are instructed in how to write behavioral objectives and how to prepare course outlines. As their first videotaped assignment, they teach a simulation of the first day of classes. All the necessary information with regard to the course syllabus and the course objectives must be included in their presentation.

In order to gain information with regard to matters such as quizzes, exams, make-up exams, term papers, deadlines, grading policy, lab reports, etc., the would-be ITAs are again required to complete their information-seeking assignments in the form of another set of communication tasks. To help the ITAs deal with classroom management in general, or with specific grading and evaluation procedures, they are encouraged to seek information about administering, proctoring, and grading exams, as well as cheating, directly from their departments.

The training program also focuses on the observed undergraduate behaviors that are perceived by the international students as potential discipline problems. Among them are classroom behaviors like tardiness, eating or drinking, reading newspapers, talking, asking questions, sleeping, listening to walkman radios, wearing baseball caps, smoking, etc. Again, these matters are discussed in class. The international students provide their description of the observed student behaviors, followed by their interpretation of the possible reasons for that behavior. More interpretations are offered by other students, and the discussion is completed with the instructor's "American" perspective. During the discussions, an attempt is made to identify possible cultural differences and the significance of such behaviors. Strategies for dealing with perceived "discipline" problems are offered. One specific tip that the students find very helpful suggests that attention of the instructor and the class be directed to the vicinity of the "cause" of the disturbance, like a student who might be reading a newspaper. We know from experience that the newspaper reader will probably become embarrassed and abandon the offensive behavior. Another strategy calls for the instructors, or TAs in this case, to position themselves next to the student whose behavior is perceived as offensive. The instructor can exercise a considerable amount of control over the classroom space.

One aspect of potential intercultural miscommunication has been brought to our attention recently. A specific group of female students expressed their concern with respect to the way some ITAs treat their female students and colleagues. Charges of sexism and sexual harassment were made. Plans are being made to include this topic as a possible discussion item in the coming year.

Implications for Research

Perhaps one of the most surprising facts in our informal surveys of TAs' perspectives of their students is their uniform negativity. Since the importance of teachers' attitudes toward their students is a fact that is well established in literature, future research should focus on the issue of mutual perceptions, impact, and attitudes between ITAs and their students. Several factors, especially those that pertain to cultural differences, should be explored. For instance, the impact of the difference between the cognitive styles of the TAs and their students should be investigated. According to Witkin (1962, 1967), cognitive styles are the characteristic self-consistent modes of functioning found pervasively throughout an individual's cognitive, i.e., perceptual and intellectual activities. Witkin calls them manifestations of broader dimensions of personal functioning evident in similar form in many areas of the individual's psychological activities. Members of a culture are thought to share similar cognitive characteristics that manifest themselves in similar behaviors and perceptions. For instance, Oddou and Mendenhall (1984, p. 90) talk about a probable correlation between the typical member's primary mode of perception and the culture's degree of differentiation of stimuli in the environment. They add that there is probably a correlation between the degree of cultural differentiation and the types of perceivers. They conclude that foreigners in a new culture tend to notice novel features (i.e., dissimilarities) more than others and tend to weight them more heavily when judging their frequency. The authors also point out that individuals have a tendency to view the "other" group less favorably and perceive the behavior of the dissimilar group as "abnormal" in relation to "abnormal" situations. Similar concepts are discussed in Schneider and Jordan (1981), Dodd (1977), Hughes (1983), and Cahir (1981).

Preferred cognitive styles are thought to result from the early childhood rearing practices in individual societies. Furthermore, Ramirez and Castaneda (1974, p. 34) conclude that early student-teacher relational experiences resulting from one's cultural background also lead to a preferred mode of cognition, communication, human relations, and motivational style. These are, according to these authors, expected to continue throughout one's own schooling.

The questions we should ask ourselves are: Is there a difference between the prevalent cognitive style of the undergraduate students and the ITAs from different sociocultural groups? If there is, and it is a reasonable assumption, can we determine a definite relational approach that would be associated with the preferred cognitive mode? Does this preferred relational style manifest itself in a "typical" preferred teaching style?

Since research indicates that Anglo-Americans tend to be primarily field-independent (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974) and Latin-Americans and Orientals, on the other hand, have a tendency to be more field-dependent (Stodolsky & Lesser, 1967; Ramirez & Price, 1974), can the mutual impact on each other be constructive in a student-teacher situation? Can the negative perceptions of the American undergraduates by their ITAs, as indicated in our survey, be attributed to the cognitive, i.e., perceptual, styles and the difference between them? To what degree, if at all, can a training program for ITAs influence their attitudes toward their American students? What impact will the possible change in ITAs' attitudes have on their teaching effectiveness?

In order to explore and analyze the above-mentioned items, this author agrees with the recommendations made by Paige (1983), "that conceptual models should be utilized and tested using multivariate statistical approaches; and that longitudinal studies should be conducted to examine attitudinal intercultural phenomena over time." Specifically, the effects of the difference between the preferred cognitive styles of the ITAs and their students should be investigated systematically within the instructional context. (Such a study is presently being conducted at Penn State.)

Summary

The training of international teaching assistants is an important task in view of the growing numbers of foreign-born nationals teaching in American postsecondary institutions. In spite of the fact that there are many language training programs, the issue of intercultural communication and cultural differences between ITAs and their students is also of importance. The intercultural training module, one of the five instructional training modules in The Pennsylvania State University's training program for ITAs, was described in this paper. It is suggested that training programs include training for intercultural understanding in order to increase the communication effectiveness of ITAs. Cultural differences play an important role in how people interact and perceive each other. It is important that these differences be investigated and that the training programs aim at closing the gap in communication, and thus improve undergraduate instruction at institutions of higher education.

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Magdalena Costantino is at the Center for English as a Second Language at the Pennsylvania State University.

Developing Listening and Speech Communication Skills: A Course for Prospective International Teaching Assistants

Patricia A. Dunkel and Tannaz Rahman

Introduction

The paper discusses the development of a course to teach prospective International Teaching Assistants (ITAs who score less than 200 on the Test of Spoken English) to improve their listening and speaking skills in English. It presents a rationale for including a course targeting development of public speaking skills in future ITAs and suggests that concurrent training in listening comprehension and notetaking skill development should be included in the curriculum. The article describes classroom listening and speaking activities and lists several commercially available materials that can be used to construct a listening and speaking curriculum. The Speaking and Listening course is the first of a three-course sequence for ITAs enrolled at The Pennsylvania State University who because of English language difficulties are not ready to take up their teaching responsibilities. The two courses following the Speaking and Listening course focus on improving ITAs' teaching methods and familiarizing them with the culture of the American classroom.

The Need for an ITA Speech Communication and Listening Curriculum: Theoretical Considerations

Teaching prospective ITAs to develop the ability to deliver oral presentations before an audience is a crucial component of an effective ITA program. Learning the principles of public speaking should help the ITAs to think critically in English, to organize information in English, and in the future to speak more effectively when they have to convey academic information to their American undergraduate students. In preparing for their future teaching responsibilities, they need, in other words, to learn the basic principles of public speaking–to "see how to formulate specific purpose statements, how to analyze and adapt to audiences, how to organize ideas and construct outlines, how to assess evidence and reasoning, how to use language effectively, and so forth" (Lucas, 1986, p. iii). A course in developing the art of public speaking should, therefore, be an integral aspect of an ITA's preservice training and should provide information concerning: (a) the basic principles of the speech communication process; (b) the initial steps in speech preparation (including the step of brainstorming for speech topics); (c) the basic principles of audience analysis; (d) the techniques of gathering speech materials (including the types of supporting materials and the library research needed for collection of such materials); (e) the effective use of assembled materials; and (f) the basic methods of speech delivery (including the use of the speaker's voice, nonverbal communication cues, and visual aids) (see Lucas, 1986).

Another crucial element of a curriculum devoted to developing ITAs' oral production skills involves the receptive skill of listening comprehension. The critical importance of listening comprehension training is today widely acknowledged in acquisition of a second language, and the emphasis in many second/foreign language classrooms is on providing listening activities as a substantial segment of the second language curriculum (Dunkel, 1986). Morley (1985, p. 32) notes, for example, that "the need for special attention to listening comprehension as an integral part of communication is now well-established." As a result, listening fluency development is viewed as the fulcrum of second language improvement, even in a class whose target objective is the improvement of oral communication skills in the second/foreign language. McCandless and Winitz (1986, p. 356) suggest that extensive listening experience, particularly at the beginning stages of language learning, has a positive effect on pronunciation. "A sufficient listening time may be necessary in order to store correctly the internal phonological and phonetic representations of speech segments."

The notion that extensive auditory input is essential for successful second language learning and improvement has not, however, been relegated to the beginning levels of language instruction. Today, advanced level classes for ITAs generally include not only oral production training but also listening and even lecture notetaking training. The Penn State Listening and Speaking curriculum for ITAs includes listening activities as an integral part of the speech communication syllabus.

The Listening and Speaking Curriculum: Practical Considerations

At The Pennsylvania State University, Speech Communication 115G is designed to develop basic speaking and listening skills in prospective ITAs whose score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) equals or exceeds 550 and whose scores on the Test of Spoken English (TSE) equals less than 200. More specifically, the course attempts to familiarize ITAs with structuring and presenting academic discourse by providing practice in both attending to and giving academic speeches. The students are required to: (a) attend to and take notes on short academic lectures presented by both American lecturers (on audiotape and videotape) and their fellow students; (b) interact in small group discussions with their peers concerning the structure, content, and delivery of an effective oral presentation; and (c) give formal in-class oral presentations.

Strategies for Developing ITA Listening and Notetaking Skills

Students listen to audiotaped lectures (or view videotapes) to accomplish two main objectives: (a) to develop lecture notetaking skills; and (b) to become familiar with the style in which an informative lecture is presented by an American professor. *Advanced Listening Comprehension: Developing Aural and Note-taking Skills* (Dunkel & Pialorsi, 1982) is used to help students achieve these objectives. In the videotaped version of *Advanced Listening Comprehension*, an American lecturer presents 15 lectures on topics ranging from the history of the Panama Canal to the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. The videotaped lectures contain elements of authentic discourse (e.g., verbal fillers, restatements, information mistakes that are then corrected, etc.). The audiotapes present a more scripted version of the lectures than do the videotapes. Both the audiotapes and the videotapes provide speaker-mentors who guide the student along in listening and notetaking-skill development. "The mentor interrupts the lecturers in the early presentations to inquire whether or not the important facts [presented by the lecturer] were noted down. Opportunity for self-correction is given, and encouragement frequently offered, so that the learner can begin to develop simultaneously both confidence and skill in listening and notetaking in English" (Dunkel & Pialorsi, 1982, pp. vii-viii).

Students listen to and take notes on 10 to 15 lectures. They are tested on the information presented in the lectures in seven announced objective-type exams. They use their notes to answer the exam questions to highlight the importance of the storage function of their notes.

Students are also required to attend to and take notes on in-class academic presentations by their classmates. They are encouraged to use their notes to summarize in writing, or orally on audiotape, the content of their peers' speeches.

Although the Dunkel and Pialorsi (1982) material is presently being used, there are other listening and notetaking courses that are commercially available and that could be used to help students develop academic listening fluency. For example, Ruetten helps students develop strategies for comprehending academic lectures by having them focus first on the main point of the lecture and then on the supporting information provided by the speaker. As Ruetten (1986, p. v) notes, "The text also aims to help students recognize typical rhetorical and organizational patterns in academic discourse and to use previous information and expectations about university courses in order to make appropriate predictions" about the content of the lectures. The lectures are given by university professors and contain information given in their college courses in political science, physical geography, and marketing. The rhetorical patterns of definition, analysis by division, classification, cause and effect, comparison and contrast are discussed as frameworks for structuring, organizing, and delivering expository material. In addition, the methods of framing lecture presentations in terms of problems/solutions, question/answer technique and chronological sequence are highlighted. *Comprehending Academic Lectures* (Ruetten, 1986) is accompanied by a set of audiotapes and an instructor's manual containing the transcripts of the lectures and an answer guide to the questions.

Mason's *Understanding Academic Lectures* has the stated goal of enabling students to "reconstruct the plan, the purpose, the supporting data and illustrations in a given lecture. It also aims to develop the ability to discern orders of importance in the material presented" (Mason, 1983, p. xi). Two types of academic discourse are presented in the Mason material: interviews and lectures. Speakers from diverse disciplines (e.g., economic geology, philosophy, history, biology, rhetoric, anthropology, English literature, and French civilization) and a number of language backgrounds are represented. In addition, as the author notes, the variety of the speakers' backgrounds are representative of that found on most large campuses in North America. Enabling students to "follow a live mind at work" in an academic context in English is one of the target objectives of the academic listening curriculum. ITAs can use the listening materials both as models of academic discourse and as catalysts for improving their listening comprehension of spoken academic discourse.

Strategies for Developing ITA In-Class Oral Presentation Skills

During the course of the semester, students give seven in-class oral presentations, ranging in length from two to three minutes at the beginning of the semester to 10 minutes at the end of the term. Before each presentation, they prepare a formal outline for each speech. Students participate in instructor-guided, in-class exercises in preparation for their speeches. They learn to: (a) recognize and utilize the different rhetorical patterns of organization (e.g., comparison and contrast, cause and effect, process, classification, and narrative); (b) recognize poorly organized examples of spoken academic discourse; (c) outline speeches; and (d) use appropriate cohesive devices (e.g., transitional phrases) in their speeches. They also learn how to conduct and use library research to substantiate their speeches. By participating in formal group and panel discussions, they learn how to express ideas in English, how to argue in favor of a position, and how to arrive at a group consensus. They also learn the structural and stylistic differences between spoken and written English.

Individual tutorial sessions held outside class are an essential component of the listening and speaking curriculum. Students meet individually with their instructor for a 40-minute session following every two oral presentations. The instructor uses the tutorial sessions to identify and remediate individual students' pronunciation and/or grammar problems. Following the tutorial, a student may be assigned to do additional pronunciation work in the language lab or in additional tutorial sessions.

The speaking component of the curriculum is segmented into two-week cycles. The main text for the speaking component is *Communicating Effectively in English* by Porter, Grant, & Draper (1985). Typically, two weeks are devoted to each unit in the book.

The Cycle of Preparation and Presentation of Speeches

Preparing the Speech (Week 1)

The first week of each two-week cycle is spent helping students to prepare for the speeches that they will make during the second week. During the preparation week, the students read the text material for homework before it is discussed in class. Each unit of the text covers a particular "type" of speech: a report on an interview and/or on a group discussion; a demonstration speech; an opinion speech; an information speech; and a proposal speech. In addition, students give a review of a scholarly article and prepare a minilecture.

At the beginning of the first week of each cycle, the instructor introduces the following week's type of speech and explains what students are to focus on in preparing their speeches (e.g., using chronological organization to frame a demonstration speech). The instructor familiarizes the students with the rhetorical devices and cues normally associated with that week's type of speech and makes them aware of the appropriate use of such devices in the particular form of address under preparation. Students are also instructed in ways of preparing and using note cards as a mnemonic device during delivery of the speech.

As a result of class discussions and instructor lecturing, the students have in mind specific speech-composing objectives as they prepare their speeches. During class they engage in many idea-generating, discussion-provoking activities in both small group and general class discussions. Deciding on the appropriateness of a particular topic for a given audience and a given amount of time, and brainstorming for the outline of a selected topic are among the in-class activities. The resulting group interactions not only provide the students with ideas concerning the structure and content of the speech under preparation, but they also enhance students' English conversational skills.

Class size is maintained at 12 students or fewer to ensure that each student has ample opportunity to communicate both on an informal basis (via in-class discussions about the speeches they are preparing), and on a formal basis (via the delivery of the speeches), and to receive sufficient feedback from the instructor.

Delivering the Speeches (Week 2)

During the week following the preparatory discussions, the students give their speeches. The speeches must include not only the elements and principles discussed during the prior week of preparation, but they must also demonstrate a comprehensive assimilation of all the good speech-making elements presented in earlier weeks. Time constraints for speeches are rigorously enforced. The time constraint varies from two to 10 minutes. For the final oral presentation each student prepares a 10-minute speech in which one concept in the student's field of study is explicated. In this speech, the students are expected to display their speech-making mastery by using all the stylistic and organizational features studied during the semester.

For the initial rounds of speeches, the instructor provides constructive criticism to the class immediately following each presentation. This is done so that the entire class can profit from the instructor's analysis of each individual's presentation. As the speeches lengthen, however, the evaluation is provided to each speaker in written form only. The written evaluations critique the individual's pronunciation, usage, body language, amount of eye contact, development of rapport with the audience, and the organization and content of the presentation. Specific grammar and pronunciation errors are dealt with during the after-class tutorials. All classroom presentations are audiotaped and constitute the data for tutorial discussions.

Summary

ITAs will be engaged in communicating large amounts of academic information in English to their English-speaking students. If they are to succeed in doing so, their oral presentation skills need to be excellent, or honed to excellence. They must both understand their American undergraduate students and be able to express themselves clearly and effectively in English. American students expect their international TAs to have fundamental knowledge of effective public speaking and to demonstrate the content and delivery skills that are seminal to public communication. The speaking and listening course for prospective ITAs at Penn State attempts to prepare them to understand English and to convey knowledge effectively in English.

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Patricia Dunkel is an Assistant Professor of Speech Communication, and Tannaz Rahman is a graduate student and a teaching assistant at the Center for English as a Second Language at The Pennsylvania State University.

A Multiperspective Approach to International Teaching Assistant Training: The International Teaching Assistant Project of the Center for Instructional Development and Research, University of Washington

Debra-L Sequeira and Ann L. Darling

When the Center for Instructional Development and Research at the University of Washington was restructured in 1983, there were many new issues that needed to be addressed concerning the improvement of undergraduate teaching and learning. Among the issues was the significant role international teaching assistants (ITAs) play in undergraduate instruction. As a result of the concerns initiated by undergraduate students, course supervisors, administrators, and ITAs themselves, the center, in 1984, initiated what has come to be known as the ITA Project.

During the last three years the center has continually modified and improved the ITA Project in an effort to provide quality instructional support for the growing population of ITAs (240 out of 1,000 TAs) at the University of Washington. Because our efforts have proven to be fruitful, this paper is an attempt to present some of our more important insights. Our purpose is three-fold. First, we will offer some background and describe the three phases of our ITA Project: (a) the prefall workshop, (b) the ongoing seminar with observations, and (c) the ongoing tutorials. Second, we will identify components of our project that have become essential to its continued effectiveness. Third, we will describe and evaluate one segment of our prefall workshop, the undergraduate "talk-back" panel, which is an example of our efforts to draw from a variety of perspectives on teaching and learning as we address ITA issues.

The ITA Project: A Description

The ITA Project assists ITAs in the areas of language, instruction, and culture, all important for success in the classroom. When we discuss language issues, we focus on language concerns that are specific to instructional settings. The ITAs deliver lectures to us, solve chemistry problems, and show us how they perform during simulations of student office hours. In other words, the ITAs use the language of their disciplines, and we listen and give feedback; we listen to them both at the center in practice sessions, and in their own classrooms and offices as they go about their instructional tasks.

Since we have found that English proficiency is necessary, but not sufficient, for success in the classroom, the remaining areas of instructional communication and culture are also emphasized. Instructional communication, then, is discipline-specific, and we offer suggestions as to how ITAs can organize their material, listen to student questions, answer student questions, and "read" nonverbal communication in the specific context, whether it be an engineering class, a physics class, or a math tutoring session.

The last component–culture–is explored in two ways. First, we use observations and interviews to understand the context in which the needs of the ITAs arise; second, we impart a general composite of what to expect from the undergraduate culture at the University of Washington. Given our goals, we attempt to assist the ITAs in language, instruction, and culture in each phase of the project.

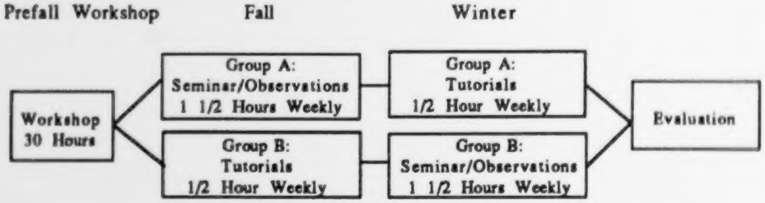
Phase I: Prefall Workshop

Two weeks before the autumn quarter begins, we conduct a one-week workshop that lasts for 30 hours. Each day we have the ITAs actively involved in working in groups, participating in microteaching sessions, discussing issues with peers and undergraduates, etc. (see Appendix A). Each day of the workshop is underscored with a guiding question, such as, what is expected of an ITA and what are the resources available? What are strategies for interacting with students? What are strategies for presenting information? etc. These questions address the ITAs' most pressing needs based on previous years' feedback. Moreover, each day progresses toward more demanding involvement for the ITAs, culminating in videotaped presentations followed by group critiques.

Phase II: Seminars/Observations and Tutorials

After the workshop, we divide the participants into two groups (see Figure 1). Group (A) is composed of those who have immediate classroom responsibilities and/or have never taught in their home countries. This group attends the weekly seminar and is observed at least twice in their instructional settings. In the other group (B) are those ITAs with immediate language needs who may be involved with students in such capacities as grading or one-to-one instruction. Group (B), then, attends our tutorials. As the diagram indicates, tutorials are half-hour weekly sessions and seminars are one-and one-half-hour weekly sessions.

Figure 1. Three Phases of ITA Project



ITAs assigned to either seminar or tutorials remain in that assignment through the fall. For winter quarter we reverse the assignments; that is, those assigned to seminar in the fall are now in the tutorials and vice-versa. Thus, the ITAs receive the benefits of both group contact and one-to-one support. Further, in both seminar and tutorials, the ITAs benefit from the center's facilities: library resources, viewing of videos, and midterm evaluations of their teaching by center staff.

Phase III: Evaluation

Spring quarter the project is evaluated in three ways. First, the ITAs complete a form that requires both quantitative and open-ended responses. Second, we conduct interviews with department chairs and course supervisors in order to best meet the needs of the specific department employing ITAs. Third, we incorporate the undergraduate perspective by interviewing several students from classes taught by ITAs whom we have observed autumn and winter quarters. The quantitative and qualitative data received from these three sources are summarized by the center staff, who discuss results and implications for the project. The feedback from these sources in 1985, for example, shaped many of our decisions for 1986, including faculty involvement and an increase in performance practice for the ITAs. Each data source is important in our efforts to improve the project the following year.

ITA Project: Essential Components

Now that we are in our third year of the ITA Project, and able to claim success, we can identify some of the components that have been essential in our efforts (see Appendix B). First, we needed to understand the University of Washington culture and ground ourselves in the values of the institution in order to receive psychological as well as financial support. Since we are the largest research institution in the Northwest, we had to accept the premise that research is first and teaching a close second. If research time is coveted over class time, then it is our mandate to help the ITA find shortcuts, such as using instructional time well so he or she will not be inundated with students during office hours. In order to assist the ITAs in their duties, we found it essential to visit departments to determine the kinds of instructional responsibilities ITAs have in their respective departments. Therefore, direct observation of ITAs and interviews with department chairs, course supervisors, and other TAs became a second essential component of the project. We found we had to meet the needs of our clients in order to keep our doors open. The center is a service agency and works on a referral basis; the ITA Project is not an exception. Departments refer new ITAs to us, but our service is not required. It is essential, then, when an ITA tells us that his or her department is different, that we go there and find out how. Our departments are very autonomous and there is not one way of teaching across campus. What if we find instructional problems when we arrive? We respond to the perceived needs of the ITA first and slowly incorporate other possible changes throughout the process. Responding to ITA needs first is the third essential component of our project. Most of our ITAs come to us claiming that language is their problem; no amount of instructional communication rhetoric will persuade them otherwise. Therefore, we address their language needs first, perhaps in tutorials, and then suggest videotaping sessions and jointly arrive at other changes that could facilitate instruction. Such changes take time, and we work best when the ITAs are involved in the project on an ongoing basis.

A final component that we have found essential to the ITA Project concerns university-wide involvement that incorporates a variety of perspectives on teaching and learning. In our prefall workshop, we schedule presentations from faculty, staff, former ITAs, and undergraduates. The stories from each group contribute to the ITAs' knowledge of the local culture. One particular culture that is talked about quite often during workshop week is the undergraduate culture. Unfortunately, the undergraduate perspective has been typically left out of many ITA training programs (Turitz, 1984). We at the University of Washington have attempted to incorporate input from undergraduates by designing what we call the "talk-back" panel. In what follows we will describe the goals, procedures, and evaluations of our "talk-back" panel.

ITA "Talk-Back" Panel

Our "talk-back" panel is designed to meet two goals. On a very pragmatic level, the panel is a way to provide information about what undergraduates expect of TAs in general and ITAs in particular. One of the differences between an ITA and a United States TA is that the latter is a product of the school system in which he or she is now assigned to teach. Because it is a familiar environment and intuitive responses can be trusted, a United States TA is likely to experience less difficulty recognizing and understanding undergraduate expectations. While the coordinators of the ITA project can provide information about undergraduate expectations, such information is obviously second hand and therefore not optimally credible to the ITA. One function served by our "talk-back" panel, then, is to provide first-hand information about what undergraduates want and expect from ITAs.

A second goal of the "talk-back" panel is to initiate dialogue between undergraduates and ITAs. In the three years that we have been operating an ITA training program, it has become apparent that undergraduates and ITAs have little opportunity to talk about their differing interpretations of appropriate teacher and student behavior. While ITAs may talk to each other, other experienced TAs, and/or the coordinators of the ITA project, they seldom, if ever, speak directly with undergraduates about what is occurring in the classroom. Similarly, although undergraduates may discuss their experiences with ITAs with fellow students, other TAs, parents, and/or university officials, they seldom confront the ITA immediately responsible for the classroom instruction. Because we believe that open channels of communication are more efficient and productive, we have designed the "talk-back" panel to increase the possibility that undergraduates and ITAs will communicate directly with one another.

In order to meet these two goals, we made several practical decisions. One of the first decisions concerned the actual form that the sessions should take. Because we wanted both to disseminate information (about undergraduate perspectives) and to encourage discussion, we chose the panel discussion method.

A second important decision concerned who would represent undergraduates on the panel. The University of Washington has a relatively strong undergraduate legislative body: the Associated Students of the University of Washington (ASUW). One of the primary agenda items for this legislative body in recent years has been "dealing with the ITA problem." Because of the salience of the issue to that body, we decided to invite officers of ASUW to represent their concerns on the panel. We also decided that the view of the ASUW should not be the only one represented to our ITAs. There are a large number of undergraduates at UW who are not active in student government and whose views, therefore, are not necessarily represented by the ASUW. In order to get a balanced undergraduate perspective, we asked undergraduate students whom we knew or had in class (and who were not involved with ASUW) to participate on the panel.

A third decision involved how much, if at all, we should monitor what undergraduates might say to the ITAs. While we wanted honesty, we also wanted diplomacy. We did not see the usefulness of exposing new ITAs to undergraduates who were hostile and attacking. It did not seem any more useful, however, to restrain undergraduates who were simply telling the truth as they saw it (not to mention the implicit violation of freedom of expression contained in this action). As a result, we decided not to monitor the content of what undergraduates said but to provide some coaching on the ways that they communicated their concerns. We asked the undergraduates to be straightforward and objective, to avoid personal attacks while being completely candid about their concerns.

For our panel discussion we selected five undergraduates (three from ASUW and two from the general UW undergraduate population) and asked each of them to prepare a five-minute presentation. We asked them to include in their presentation a description of their expectations for TAs in general and ITAs in specific, some experiences they have had with ITAs (positive and negative), and any other general concerns about ITAs and undergraduate instruction that they might like to voice. Each of the five undergraduates then spoke for about five minutes to the entire ITA audience. At the end of the presentations, we opened the floor for general questions and comments. When most of the comments and questions had been addressed, one of the staff summarized the primary issues that had been raised during either the formal presentations or the general discussion. We then broke the large group into a number of smaller groups, distributing ourselves and the undergraduates evenly. Each of the small groups was asked to discuss possible resolutions of one of the major issues previously summarized. Each group was given a different issue to discuss. Results of the small discussion groups were then reported back to the larger group.

The "talk-back" panel is an important part of our week. It allows ITAs to acquire information about undergraduates from undergraduates and it provides at least an initial context in which undergraduates and ITAs can talk freely and openly about different interpretations of their experiences in teaching and learning. In the two years we have used the panel to achieve these goals, we have not experienced any severe negative consequences. In fact, participants have reported learning a great deal from the session. Through both their quantitative evaluations and their anecdotal comments, ITAs report increased understanding of the student perspective. The undergraduate participants, on the other hand, have frequently mentioned how the panel has increased their understanding of the difficulties ITAs face in United States classrooms. Since our "talk-back" panel has been well received, we will continue to incorporate it in our fall workshop week. In the future, however, we do hope to provide a little more structure to the undergraduate comments (perhaps asking them to address specific issues rather than speak globally about expectations) and increase the amount of time we allow for discussion.

Conclusion

We have presented background information and a description of the ITA Project at the University of Washington. In addition, we have identified the components of our project that we have found to be essential to its continued effectiveness. Last, we described the undergraduate talk-back panel, which has been a successful part of our prefall workshop. It is our hope that presenting our experience at the Center for Instructional Development and Research will provide impetus for thinking about additional ways of assisting ITAs.

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Appendix A

Center for Instructional Development and Research

ITA Workshop Schedule, September 15-19, 1986

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH

What is expected of an ITA and what are the resources available?

8:30-10:30	Welcome: Jody Nyquist, Director for Instructional Development, Center for Instructional Development and Research. ITA Project Staff: Debra Sequeira, Coordinator; Ann Darling, Staff Consultant; and Karen Freisem, Staff Associate Orientation: Preview goals and schedule for workshop week ESL Resources: William Harshbarger, Academic Coordinator, English as a Second Language Programs Introductions exercise
10:30-10:45	BREAK
10:45-12:00	View and discuss videotape, "Role of the Graduate TA"
12:00-1:30	LUNCH
1:30-2:00	Welcome from the Graduate School: Elizabeth Feetham, Assistant Dean of the Graduate School
2:00-2:45	Lecture/Discussion: Linguistic and Language Production Professor Carol Stoel-Gammon, Speech and Hearing Sciences
2:45-3:00	BREAK
3:00-4:00	Lecture/Discussion: Strategies for responding to student questions
4:00-4:15	SPEAK test preview

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH

What are strategies for interacting with students?

8:30-9:00	Group A: SPEAK test

	Group B: Practical Application: Strategies for responding to student questions
9:00-9:30	Groups A and B switch
9:30-9:45	BREAK
9:45-11:00	Lecture/Discussion: Five Stumbling Blocks to Intercultural Communication
11:00-12:00	Lecture/Discussion: Advice on running a lab section Anne Paul, Staff Consultant–CIDR, Teaching Associate–Biology
12:00-1:30	LUNCH
1:30-2:45	Lecture/Discussion with practice exercises: Effective listening
2:45-3:00	BREAK
3:00-4:00	Panel Discussion: Experienced ITAs talk about "the first year" Participants: Yong Mei Wang, Chemistry; Du Ping, Chemistry; Teru Homma, Electrical Engineering; and Tailan Chi, International Business

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH

What are strategies for presenting information?

8:30-9:30	Lecture/Discussion: Structuring and delivering a good presentation
9:30-10:15	Pair/Small Group Work: Planning a 5-minute presentation (to be audiotaped)
10:15-10:30	BREAK
10:30-11:15	Lecture/Discussion: Using the overhead projector and chalkboard as instructional tools
11:15-12:00	Discussion: Critiquing a presentation
12:00-1:30	LUNCH
1:30-3:00	Panel Discussion: Undergraduate students discuss what it's like having an ITA. Participants: David Chee, Board of Control Member; Bill Currie; Mary Lyn Hikel, ASUW Academic Affairs; Lisa Kaluza; and Jeff MacLean, ASUW President

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH

What are strategies for managing instruction?

8:30-9:30	Lecture/Discussion: Your first day of class–Introducing yourself and your syllabus
9:30-10:30	Pairwork: Planning first day presentations
10:30-10:45	BREAK
10:45-12:00	Groups A, B, C: Videotape first day presentations Groups D, E, F: Evaluating teaching Jim Stone, Staff Consultant–CIDR
12:00-1:30	LUNCH
1:30-2:45	Groups ABC and DEF switch
2:45-3:00	BREAK
3:00-4:00	Lecture/Discussion: Issues involved in tutoring students Professor Jere Lord, Department of Physics

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH

What are strategies for preventing misunderstandings with students?

8:30-9:45	Groups A, B, and C: Videotape critiques Groups D, E, and F: Free
9:45-11:00	Groups ABC and DEF switch
11:00-12:00	Lecture/Discussion: Learning without the Dictionary–Observing Cultural Patterns Kristine Fitch, Teaching Assistant–Speech Communication
12:00-1:30	LUNCH
1:30-3:00	View and discuss videotape, "Encounters with Teaching"–Role-plays
3:00-3:30	Wrap-up and workshop evaluation
3:30-4:30	Reception for participants and presenters–Parrington 206

Appendix B

University of Washington International Teaching Assistant Project Essentials

I. Institutional Philosophy/Support

   A. Administrative

   B. Departmental

II. Direct Observation/Interviews

   A. ITAs

   B. Department Chairs/Course Supervisors

III. ITAs' Perceived Needs

   A. Applied Problem-solving

IV. Variety of Perspectives

   A. Faculty/Staff

   B. Experienced ITAs/TAs

   C. Undergraduates

Center for Instructional Development & Research
University of Washington
107 Parrington, DC-07
Seattle, WA 98185
(206) 543-6588

Debra-L Sequeira is International Teaching Associate Project Coordinator, and Ann L. Darling is Staff Consultant with the Center for Instructional Development and Research, University of Washington.

ESL Workshop for Graduate Students at the City College of New York, CUNY

Nancy Lay and Linda H. Mantel

Background

At least 20% of the graduate students in residence at City College of New York (CCNY) are foreign-born, including close to 80% of the students in physical sciences and more than half in engineering. These figures include both master's students registered at the college and PhD students registered at the graduate school who are doing their work at the college. Many of these students are, or would like to be, TAs. Their English language proficiency ranges from excellent to very poor, although they are often well trained and knowledgeable in their professional fields.

Two years ago, the college received a grant from AT&T for a special three-week English language program for graduate students in engineering. The program was quite successful, and a similar small program was carried out during the summer of 1985. Subsequent demand by graduate students for ESL courses in the autumn of 1985 had the effect of depriving some of our undergraduates of their needed places in class. Later that fall, Professors Lay and Mantel requested and were awarded a grant from the President's Fund for Innovation and Excellence to run an experimental ESL workshop for graduate students in January 1986, on which we report here.

Plans and Objectives

A three-week, intensive workshop (three hours a day, four days a week, for a total of 36 hours) was held, directed by Professor Nancy Lay. Fifteen graduate students participated; all except two were from China. Their fields included electrical engineering, chemistry, biochemistry, physics, biology, and art. Their length of time in residence and their language proficiency varied greatly. Major objectives included increased proficiency in speaking and understanding English, and ability to organize and present orally to their peers both technical and nontechnical materials.

Curriculum and Method

The curriculum included traditional writing and speaking exercises from texts (G. Barnes, *Communication Skills for the Foreign-born Professional*; N. D. S. Lay, *Making the Most of English*), and two novel activities that were quite different from those usually carried out. The first was role playing, in which pairs or small groups of students were presented with a social situation and engaged in a dialogue or conversation to decide how to deal with it. They then acted it out for the class, and invited comments and discussion. This exercise focused particularly on natural expressions and clarity of pronunciation.

The second innovation was the oral journal, in which each student recorded on tape a paragraph from the day's assignment, then followed it with commentary on the ideas proposed, activities in class, and other items that they wished to "discuss" with the teacher. Particularly for those normally reticent individuals for whom class discussion is difficult, the oral journal proved an excellent tool to increase fluency and build both confidence and vocabulary. Stronger students also benefited, since they were able to discuss their ideas in detail. Each day the teacher listened to the tapes and returned them with taped comments on pronunciation, expression of ideas, and specific suggestions for improvements. In this way, a useful dialogue was established between teacher and students in a nonthreatening verbal situation.

Evaluation

Oral proficiency and presentation were assessed before and after the program by videotape. In the first session, the students introduced themselves and spoke for a minute or two about their activities at the college. During the last session, each student was asked to introduce a classmate, who then gave a five-minute talk on his or her research field and answered questions from the rest of the class. It was clear that by the end of the program students were able to present material in their fields clearly and respond adequately to questions. Many of their earlier nervous mannerisms (hesitation, repetition, giggling) had disappeared. However, when this group was compared with another group from a standard second-level ESL class (which was more advanced and less heterogeneous in fluency to start), it was clear that the special group had not had enough time to achieve the larger nontechnical vocabulary and fluency that the regular class demonstrated.

Writing was assessed by asking the student, at the end of the program, to write a brief essay on the important research questions in their areas. The essays were compared with those from a group of graduate students enrolled in the standard second-level ESL class (the same comparison group as that mentioned above). Each paper was read by two graders. The results showed that the writing proficiency of the special project group was greater than that of the other group, but that neither was at a satisfactory level. Although the project did not focus on development of writing skills, it is clear that such skills should be further cultivated before the student is faced with the problem of writing a dissertation!

Suggestions for the Future

A three-week intensive course focusing on development of oral skills, particularly through the use of the oral journal, is a useful way to encourage students whose experience of spoken English is minimal. More time should be taken with details of pronunciation and development of nontechnical, everyday vocabulary. However, a follow-up course during the semester is also essential to stabilize the skills and to build further upon the vocabulary. This course should be individualized as much as possible to the particular student's strengths and weaknesses. Frequent videotaping helps to document and reinforce progress. In addition, a parallel component focusing on technical writing should begin when the students have acquired an appropriate vocabulary.

Nancy Lay is Chair of English as a Second Language and Linda H. Mantel is Assistant Provost of the City College of New York.

Training International TAs at Texas Tech: An Overview

Rosslyn Smith

Texas Tech University began a formal training program for prospective international teaching assistants (ITAs) in 1980. The goals of the program reflect the special needs of the ITAs and the American students with whom they will come in contact. These goals include developing an understanding of the role of the teacher in American higher education classrooms, acquainting participants with the cross-cultural variables that may affect them in the classroom, providing intensive training in English pronunciation and intonation, practicing classroom communication skills and instructional strategies, and assisting students during their first semester teaching with follow-up observations and tutorials. The following discussion provides an overview of the program as it is currently structured, focusing on curricular, rather than administrative issues.

Program

Admission to the training program for prospective ITAs is achieved either by departmental and graduate school requirement or departmental recommendation. International students are offered teaching assistantships contingent upon successful completion of the summer TA workshop. Thus, this university requirement is designed to ensure that no nonnative English speaker is placed in a classroom teaching situation without appropriate testing and training. Self-supported ITAs or those employed as research assistants often want to participate and are admitted to the summer workshop on a space-available basis.

Some departments use an informal prescreening process before making assistantship offers to students from overseas or from out of town. Students applying to the departments of math or chemistry have been asked to submit a five- to ten-minute audiocassette tape of a lecture on a topic in their field. When the tapes are received, they are evaluated by the graduate advisor of the department and by the director of the training program. A preliminary evaluation is then made of the student's potential in the classroom and of the likelihood of successful completion of the workshop.

When the students arrive on campus for the three-week summer workshop portion of the training program, they are given the Michigan battery, a series of placement/diagnostic English tests developed by the University of Michigan. The battery includes a 100-item multiple-choice test of grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, a 30-minute impromptu composition, and a 90-item multiple-choice, taped listening comprehension test. At the end of the workshop, the listening comprehension test is readministered to measure any gain in listening comprehension ability. Students are also given the SPEAK (Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit) test, published by the Educational Testing Service.

Students also have the opportunity to take the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (the MBTI), a psychological typing instrument based on the work of psychiatrist Carl Jung. They may attend group or individual feedback sessions directed by a faculty member who is an authority on the Myers-Briggs. The MBTI is offered for the personal enrichment of the students.

In the summer workshop, students engage in a demanding schedule of classes and activities. There are four main components of the program: cross-cultural orientation, classroom communication, English, and a practicum.

Cross-Cultural Orientation

This unit lasts from 10 to 14 hours and includes: (a) the phases of transitional adjustment; (b) definition of the terms culture, perception, communication, and values; (c) comparison of values using charts, film, case studies, and small group work; and (d) awareness of and expectations for change.

Classroom Communication

This component runs from 22 to 26 hours. Topics covered include: definition of communication, intercultural adjustment, nonverbal communication, classroom communication, and classroom administration. Particular emphasis is given to teacher image, credibility, types of presentations, first impressions, inferences, observations, facts, handling conflict, and presentational skills.

English

The English component consists of 16 to 18 hours of pronunciation and intonation practice and evaluation. Students work on vocabulary in their field, reading aloud, consonant sounds, weak and strong vowels, rhythm and sentence stress, dictation, some idiomatic expressions, and building listening comprehension skills.

Practicum

The practicum includes 16 to 18 hours of work integrating the skills being learned and making presentations, which are videotaped. Students view the first taped presentation in class; the other two presentations are viewed individually with the instructor, at which time personalized feedback is given. The topics of the taped presentations are: (a) defining a term or describing a geometric shape or figure, (b) describing a process, and (c) simulating a classroom lecture or presentation including using visual aids and fielding questions. Other areas covered include a discussion of what makes a person a good teacher, the parts of a class, general discourse signals, handling questions, interactive discourse, active listening, and question formation. Students also view and discuss brief videotaped segments of actual classroom or lab presentations by instructors at United States universities.

Materials Used

Gary Althen's *Manual for Foreign Teaching Assistants* has been used since its publication in 1981. Students also receive a variety of handouts to use in preparing talks, practicing pronunciation, and other workshop activities. Other texts available for use are: Alison Lanier, *Living in the U.S.A.*, Hoopes and Ventura, eds., *Intercultural Sourcebook: Cross-Cultural Training Methodologies* , Edward Stewart, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, and Weeks, Petersen, and Brislin, eds., *A Manual of Structured Experiences for Cross-Cultural Learning* .

These are supplemented by a variety of locally developed materials in each of the areas.

Results and Follow-up

At the end of the workshop, each instructor in the program submits a written evaluation of the participants to the director. In formulating the evaluations, instructors emphasize the student's ability to communicate effectively, respond appropriately to questions, and interact in an appropriate manner with other people. In some cases departmental representatives view the final videotaped presentations of their students. This gives the departments an opportunity to provide input and to have a better understanding of the training. The director compiles all the evaluations and places students into one of three categories: "should not be used at this time," "may be used with close supervision," or "may be used with routine supervision."

Students who do not successfully complete the workshop may pursue several alternatives. Some receive or continue on research assistantships. Some serve as graders or technicians. Some enroll in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) conversation or grammar and composition courses. Students who want to be reconsidered may contact their graduate advisors or departmental chairs. Special sessions are held regularly to allow these students to present talks in their field. It is customary for the graduate advisor and one or more faculty members from the department to be present, as well as the director of the training program and sometimes one or two American students. Prospective TAs who have made sufficient progress since the last evaluation are approved for assignment to a classroom teaching situation.

Departmental graduate advisors receive a list of students and their final rating, usually within one day of the end of the summer workshop. This notification includes any recommended or required coursework in English. Departments may then offer assistantships to students or seek other means of supporting those who fail. A detailed report of each student's English problems and progress is sent to advisors within a few days. A summary report is also prepared for the vice president for academic affairs and research with copies to the Graduate School and all participating departments.

In 1984 Texas Tech began a follow-up course in the autumn semester for those TAs who go through the summer workshop and are placed in classrooms. The course provides additional instruction in teaching skills and English pronunciation and intonation, and is a forum for students to ask questions or raise issues that concern them about their own teaching situations. The format of this course changed in 1986 to include classroom observations, additional videotaping, and tutorial sessions.

This program began in 1980 with eight participants. It grew to a high of 40 participants in 1982 and has leveled off to an average of about 30 per year. Since the program began, departments report greater satisfaction with, and fewer complaints about, the English proficiency of their ITAs. In general, graduate advisors and department chairs are enthusiastic about the results. The students who participate, although initially skeptical and somewhat resentful at having to attend, report high levels of satisfaction with the content and quality of the program.

Rosslyn Smith is Associate Professor and Director of the Foreign TA Training Program at Texas Tech University.

The Effectiveness of Videotaped Protocols as a Training Technique for International TAs

Brian Davis

Introduction

The study described here draws extensively from a number of studies at the college level relating the concept of teacher clarity to measures of teaching effectiveness. Mintzes (1979) and Murray (1983) found teacher clarity to correlate significantly with student ratings of teacher effectiveness. Hines, Cruickshank, and Kennedy (1985) reported measures of teacher clarity to be significantly and positively related to postinstructional measures of student achievement and satisfaction. That study took place within the context of a college peer-teaching laboratory situation and is reported extensively in Hines (1981). Three underlying behavioral dimensions with, in total, 20 primary, lower-inference teacher behaviors associated with each dimension were reported by Hines. As that study took place in a laboratory-like setting, the extent to which the findings could be generalized to other more natural classroom settings and the value of using lower-inference behavior to train teachers to be clearer was open for investigation (Hines, et al., 1985).

The present study (Davis, 1984) addressed both the feasibility of training international TAs (ITAs) in the use of these lower-inference teacher clarity behaviors and the relationship between the training, the use of the behaviors in the classroom, and the postinstructional achievement of the students taught. The primary intent was to determine if the achievement of the students of teaching assistants trained in the use of these behaviors through a protocol-based approach would be significantly different from the achievement of the students of untrained ITAs. The secondary purpose was to examine the relationship between student achievement and the use of the behavior by the ITAs in the classroom.

Pilot Testing and Modification of Instrument

The initial instrument, which was piloted with two classes of undergraduate students, consisted of 27 items grouped under five different dimensions or headings. The first 20 items, falling under three different headings, were drawn from the study by Hines (1981), which identified three underlying teacher behavioral dimensions defining the clarity variable at the undergraduate college level.

Items 21-24, under the heading *Establishes Rapport with the Students*, were drawn from two studies of teaching at the college level (Mintzes, 1979; Meredith & Bub, 1977).

Items 25-27, under the heading *Uses Communication Skills*, were drawn from several studies dealing with TAs in general and ITAs in particular (Buckenmeyer, 1972; Dalgaard, 1976; Goepper & Knorre, 1980; Golmon, 1975; Krockover, 1980; Szymanski, 1978; Hinofotis & Bailey, 1981; Bailey, 1977).

The initial instrument was administered to two classes of undergraduate students (n=38 and 23) at an introductory course level. Eight to 10 days later, the instrument was readministered, and correlations were calculated for each item on the test-retest response. This instrument referred to each item and asked students to report the degree to which the teacher exhibited that behavior during the course. The intent was to establish the clarity of the description of the behavior, the students' understanding of this description, and the reliability over time.

As a result, modifications were made to the instrument, resulting in a 22-item instrument that was retested with two different groups of students. The item-by-item Pearson r ranged from 0.4 to 0.8 with 75% exceeding 0.5.

Cronbach Alphas were calculated in order to determine the reliability of the instrument. For the final instrument, the indices for the five sections ranged from 0.7 to 0.9, and the overall index was of the order of 0.9.

Student observer-raters (graduate ITAs who had previously taken the researcher's TA training program) were trained in the use of the instrument, utilizing protocol videotapes of TAs teaching. Over a three-day period, prior to formal observation of a videotape selected for the purpose of testing observer ability, three observers met with the researcher to discuss the behavioral definitions of the observed behaviors in order to reach consensus on meaning (Appendix A). Minor amendments were made as necessary.

In order to facilitate replication of this study, great care was taken in behaviorally defining the items on the Report of Observed Teacher Behaviors instrument. Levinson-Rose and Menges (1981), in their review of the research on college teaching, pointed out the usefulness of clearly operationalized variables when comparing studies. In general, the behavioral definitions for the lower-inference teacher behaviors used in this study focused on verbal teacher behaviors in an attempt to reduce the need for higher-inference-based decisions by observers.

During subsequent sessions, observers in training recorded the presence or absence of such behaviors, using this instrument with a modified scale while watching videotapes of TAs teaching. Observers then compared their reports and examined the sources of disagreement. The modified scale for the instrument allowed for the recording of the absence or presence of the behaviors and, in the case of certain ones, for the frequency of occurrence. Recording in these sessions was at first collaborative and finally independent.

The final step, once good independent agreement seemed to have been reached, was to view and independently rate a selected videotape, previously unseen, of a TA teaching. The researcher and observers independently checked those behaviors present and the checklists were then compared, using a correlational technique. A correlation matrix was constructed for the ratings of the three observers and the researcher. Almost perfect agreement was found, with only very small differences existing on two of the 22 items of the instrument for two of the observers.

At the request of the observers, the order of items was modified for convenience of use. The final instrument is shown in Appendix B.

The Protocol Videotapes

International graduate students who had been involved in a TA training program taught by the researcher assisted in the production of videotapes designed to demonstrate the presence or absence of certain lower-inference teacher behaviors. (The contribution of the Teacher Education Laboratory in the College of Education in this production must be acknowledged with gratitude.) These students, who had undergone intensive training using a microteaching approach, scripted their own episodes demonstrating exemplary or nonexemplary behaviors prior to videotaping. Episodes varied from 15 to 30 minutes in length and depicted a typical recitation session in the TA's area.

TA Training

These protocol tapes were subsequently used in the training of a new group of prospective ITAs. The program focused principally on effective teaching behavior using the protocol tapes and a microteaching approach, although cultural issues and subject-related skills were also addressed. At the conclusion of training, a test videotape was used to ascertain the degree to which the TAs could identify the presence or absence of the desired teacher behaviors. A written response to the videotape (viewed twice) was required in a closed-book test situation.

Research Study

The target population for this study consisted of novice ITAs enrolled as graduate students at The Ohio State University. The sample consisted of ten graduate students, four (two treatment, two control) from the mathematics department, and six from the statistics department. Students from each department were enrolled in a summer training program that was specifically designed to prepare novice ITAs in these departments. The term novice indicated that the prospective TA had not taught before nor received any formal teacher training.

Five novice ITAs who did not participate in the training program were selected to form a control group from among those ITAs who were not present during the summer but arrived on campus prior to the commencement of teaching in the following quarter. ITAs were chosen as controls in each department, each being matched with a TA in the treatment group. The criteria for matching were as follows: (a) Each TA should be novice as in the definition; (b) each pair should be of similar ethnic origin; and (c) each pair should be of equivalent ability in spoken English. Sex was not considered as a criterion variable for matching pairs of ITAs, as the literature does not support it as a significant variable (Bos, Zakrajsek, Wolf, & Stoll, 1980).

TA pairs were assigned as recitation leaders to specific courses within each department. Such assignment was arbitrary, depending on the needs of the department. Consequently, not all pairs were assigned to the same undergraduate course nor to a single professor lecturing for the course.

Undergraduate students were assigned at random to class sections (with very little possibility of switching sections due to enrollment limits), and each section within the given department used a common textbook and wrote a common end-of-term final examination. Thus it was possible to directly compare the members of TA pairs in terms of teaching effectiveness and to relate differences in effectiveness to training in and use of classroom teaching behaviors.

The trained observers were randomly assigned pairs of ITAs, each consisting of a TA from each of the treatment and control groups. Each observer then observed his or her assigned ITAs over a six-week period commencing the third week of autumn quarter. The observers were required to observe the same pair commencing either the third or fourth week of the quarter and thereafter approximately every two weeks. As a result of the three observations of each TA, the frequency of the use of the lower-inference behaviors as exhibited by each TA over the six-week period was established.

Analyses

Analyses focused on the TA pairs, each consisting of one trained and one untrained TA. These pairs were independent. Consequently a one-tail t-test was applied to each pair using a statistical package supplied by Statistical Analysis Systems (SAS). The package accounted for unequal numbers of undergraduate students in the ITAs' classes when analyzing data and the appropriate t and p values were used in reporting the findings. The dependent variable for the analysis was undergraduate raw achievement scores on the end-of-term examination, and TA training was the independent variable.

Findings

Significant differences were found at the 0.05 level for three pairs. In the instance of one pair, the two groups of undergraduate students were not taught by the same professor. The different faculty involved therefore may be considered to be an uncontrolled (extraneous) variable that may have affected results.

While the significant difference in achievement shown by the undergraduates of the other two TA pairs favors the trained TA, it provides insufficient evidence to answer the major research question in the affirmative. Nevertheless, the findings provide grounds for further efforts in this area.

It would appear that training in the use of certain behaviors did not for the ITAs result in significantly different use of the behaviors when compared to the control ITAs, even though the training program examination demonstrated cognitive mastery of the behaviors. Again, experience may have caused the control ITAs to rapidly adopt these behaviors to a level not significantly different from the trained ITAs. It is also possible that a less interactive–that is, a more didactic approach–may be better for the undergraduates in the given classroom situation.

An alternative explanation is that, given the cultural background of many of the ITAs, the interactive mode of teaching as promoted by the training program may be too alien for the ITAs to demonstrate in actual classroom performance. Of the ten ITAs, it is reasonable to say that at least six were not familiar from experiences in their own country with the interactive mode of teaching.

An equally plausible explanation may be that of the effect of undergraduate feedback on TA behavior. Behaviors that the undergraduates overtly or covertly reject in the classroom may be dropped, especially in the absence of any positive reinforcement from outside of the classroom. Given that interactive behaviors require some fluency with language, such behaviors are more likely to be dropped rapidly by the ITAs. One offered supporting evidence for this. The ITA stated that the ITAs tried hard to involve the undergraduate students but in the face of lack of response, temporal constraints, the pressures in their own graduate programs, and lack of support following training, it was very difficult to continue practicing what had been learned.

It is interesting to note the findings with regard to the spoken English level of the TA. It was found that greater use of the behaviors was associated with trained ITAs with high spoken-English ability. This suggests that performance of the behaviors may be a function of both the training and the ability to speak English. This study used SPEAK, which is a locally administered form of the Test of Spoken

English. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), which tests listening comprehension, is in general use across the United States as a device for assessing the potential ability of ITAs to communicate in the classroom. The SPEAK test, which is a test of spoken English in which the examinee's pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and overall spoken comprehensibility are assessed, is now used by a number of universities across the United States. Correlational analyses found a weak, insignificant relationship between these two measures. Given that the two measures address different aspects of English ability, the result should not be surprising. What is more important is the implication that one measure is no substitute for the other.

A fairly strong, significant relationship was found between the SPEAK scores and scores on the GRE-Verbal test. The latter, unlike TOEFL, is standardized on the American population, and it was suggested in the review of the literature that it constituted a possible predictor of overall classroom teaching ability. The findings suggest that it is at least a better proxy for spoken English ability than TOEFL.

Summary of Results

Some evidence was found that training ITAs produced more effective ITAs when compared with ITAs who had not taken the training program. The criteria upon which effectiveness was measured was that of the achievement of the ITAs' undergraduate students on a common end-of-term examination.

Two of the pairs of ITAs (each containing one trained and one untrained TA) were assigned as recitation instructors in such a way that the design controls were not violated. In both cases the undergraduate students of the trained ITAs performed significantly better (at the 0.05 level) than those of the untrained ITAs. The presence of different faculty teaching the undergraduate students of the ITAs in a given pair and/or an inequality between the ITAs in spoken-English ability would appear to have potential for influencing the outcome of instruction in terms of undergraduate achievement, and so make comparisons nonproductive.

All of the trained ITAs demonstrated a cognitive assimilation of the lower-inference behaviors addressed in the training program. Nevertheless, it was found that the assimilated knowledge was not uniformly translated into the demonstrated performance of these behaviors in the classroom.

Certain behaviors were used frequently by trained and untrained ITAs, and these reflected behaviors were closely associated with the processing of content. Behaviors infrequently used by both groups (such as giving advance organizers, presenting summative reviews, and preparing material prior to class in the form of handouts or overhead transparencies) tended to be those that would be associated with a level of teaching that had gone beyond the survival stage.

Analyses revealed that the use of certain interactive behaviors was related to the interaction between training and spoken-English ability. Training was most effective in bringing about high use of the behaviors when the language ability of the TA was high.

Extreme differences in spoken English ability seemed to account for the overall use of certain behaviors by ITAs. Those who were categorized as "generally not comprehensible" used the cluster of behaviors far less frequently. As in other analyses, the number of ITAs involved was small (n=3) because only two ITAs fit the two categories of spoken English. Correlational analyses tended to support the finding for only trained ITAs. Only the trained ITA group had members with very low and very high scores on spoken English.

No relationship was found between the spoken English level of ITAs and the achievement of their undergraduate students. This finding may be due to problems in the measurement of spoken English ability. Although the TOEFL is frequently used by departments as a means of assessing an international graduate student's level of spoken English, analyses revealed that the GRE-Verbal examination score would be a better proxy, as it had a strong and significant relationship with the TA scores on a test of spoken English (SPEAK).

Recommendations for Further Research

Design Recommendations

Given the small number of ITAs involved (10) and difficulties encountered in constructing meaningful cut-off points for analyses of the data, this study must be viewed primarily as an initial investigation or pilot study in the field. The study could be replicated under its present design, preferably with an ITA population of at least 100. The present study attempted to control, unsuccessfully in some cases, for a number of variables. These included the level of the course, the faculty involvement in the teaching process, the time and day of the recitation sections observed, and a number of variables peculiar to the ITAs who constituted the equivalent pairs.

No attempt was made, nor would it have been successful, to control for disparity in the number of students in recitation sections. In many cases the disparity was great, leading to large differences in variation of undergraduate examination scores and to disproportionate numbers of undergraduates in cells during certain analyses.

It is strongly recommended that, where possible, data be collected from sections that are more closely equivalent in numbers of undergraduate students and that are taught by one faculty member in lecture. This would necessitate several hundred students in the lecture situation with multiple recitation sections. Such an occurrence is not unusual in large university settings, particularly if the course is a service one.

While scores from a common examination, objectively scored, as in this study, can provide some measure of undergraduate achievement, it is suggested that other measures might be adopted. In this present study, in order to perform a number of analyses, it was necessary to ignore the fact that data collected came from examinations in three different courses. This was considered justifiable in that the courses were of similar nature, scored objectively, and with the same upper and lower limits. With a larger sample, as described above, recourse such as this may not be necessary.

An alternative way of measuring and comparing the achievement of undergraduate students of trained and untrained ITAs would be to collect data on a random sample of undergraduates in courses for which the recitation sections taught by the ITAs were prerequisite. Unfortunately, there are a number of intervening variables that may make any causal connections between student achievement and TA training and teaching difficult. As suggested earlier, undergraduate students can take compensatory action when confronted by a less effective teaching-learning situation. Such factors are difficult to either measure or control.

Questions and Recommendations

If the training program did indeed cause the undergraduate students of the two trained ITAs to achieve better, the question arises as to exactly what the training did for the ITAs in question. If the trained ITAs did not use the behaviors promoted in the training program significantly differently from the untrained ITAs, what other aspects of their effectiveness were changed?

It is possible that the instrument measuring the use of behaviors did not measure the behaviors that were important in the given context. This suggests that there is a need to investigate what behaviors are demonstrated by TAs who are considered effective in recitation sections. This may vary with course level; for example, service courses at an introductory level and courses for subject majors at a more advanced level. The needs of the students in these different levels may be such that the behaviors demonstrated by the TA will be different.

The behaviors in this present study are those directed toward the understanding of the content taught. This suggests the development in the students of problem-solving skills and an in-depth understanding of the relationship of different parts of the content. Such a suggestion may be quite inappropriate for introductory courses. Where such a concept is appropriate it is recommended that a tracer technique be applied to the assessment of TA effectiveness. This concept focuses on a specific condition that represents the activities of the subjects under study. If the condition is unlikely to occur, it should not be selected. If it is likely to occur, the prevalence rate should be expected to be high enough to permit collection of adequate data from a limited population. Assessment of undergraduate skill in problem solving and application of knowledge is a possible tracer activity for future research in TA effectiveness when the above criteria are met.

The training program may have had a number of hidden effects on the ITAs that subsequently impacted on the effectiveness of their teaching. The simplest effect may have been a Hawthorne effect in which the actual training, the content, was not important, but the fact that training was received was important. This effect may manifest itself in a number of ways. The TA may feel more confident, less anxious, and so transmit the feeling to the students. It is recommended that attitudinal measures be applied to TAs prior to and following training to examine the changes brought about by training.

It is also recommended that reinforcement of the behaviors learned in training take place during the subsequent teaching. This would provide a means of preventing rejection of the behaviors over time. It would also enable the researcher to detect those instances where the TAs were unable or unwilling to demonstrate learned behaviors. Such an inability, even with reinforcement, may be found to be limited to such TA variables as attitudes and level of spoken English.

Further research is required concerning ITAs whose spoken English level is very high or very low. The effect of low spoken-English level on student attitudes, learning, and compensatory behaviors and upon the ITAs' ability to demonstrate learned behaviors needs further research.

Finally, the concepts of recitation teaching and ITA training need to be investigated very carefully. It is important to establish exactly what kind of teacher behaviors are important in the recitation classroom and whether or not these are subject to context differences such as content matter and course level. It is equally important to establish the impact of the cultural background of ITAs in both their preparation for and performance in classrooms in the United States.

Concluding Remarks

This study resulted from a perceived need to address concerns expressed in the literature regarding the preparation of teaching assistants in general and international teaching assistants in particular. A review of the literature identified a number of areas of concern. For TAs in general, these included the ability to deliver content in such a way as to promote student understanding in the classroom. Certain lower-inference teacher behaviors purporting to further this end were identified and incorporated into a training program. For ITAs in particular, language and culturally based factors were identified as possible inhibitors to communication in the classroom. Consequently, a cultural component was incorporated into the training program in order to expose the ITAs to the teaching style extant in the United States. The ITAs participating in the training were tested for their spoken English ability and were matched as closely as possible on this variable with ITAs who did not receive training. These ITA "equivalent pairs" were also matched as closely as possible in terms of ethnic origins.

A number of limitations were voluntarily imposed upon this study. These included those resulting from a quasiexperimental design, as ITAs were not randomly assigned to the treatment or control group. Additionally, it was not possible to assign all equivalent pairs either to the same professor in a course or to the same course. Temporal and financial constraints prohibited the observation of TAs in the classroom other than on three occasions during a six-week period. An unanticipated limitation was the small number of participants available for study at the time it was carried out. This rendered some of the proposed analyses extremely difficult to carry out and others open to extremely careful interpretation given the small number. It was necessary to treat undergraduate achievement scores in the three different courses as situations sufficiently similar as to warrant not performing separate analyses by course.

Nevertheless, the study provided some partial answers to questions concerning the training of TAs and their subsequent performance in the classroom. The evidence of success is inconclusive in terms of undergraduate achievement or by the degree of use of the lower-inference behaviors included in the program and later observed in the classroom. Even though cognitive assimilation of the behaviors was demonstrated, the increased use of the behaviors was not uniformly apparent when comparing trained and untrained ITAs except by those trained ITAs whose spoken English level was high.

It would appear that cultural background and/or spoken English ability may inhibit the practice of learned behaviors in the classroom situation. In the given recitation situation, the use of certain behaviors may be inappropriate. The use of behaviors by the ITAs tended to decline over time, suggesting that some form of reinforcement is essential if learned behaviors are to be practiced. The study raised a number of questions for further research. These included: (a) the impact of training on the ITAs in other than the intended areas of impact; (b) the type of behaviors appropriate for a given level of recitation situation; (c) the impact of TA background culture and spoken English ability on TA potential for training and ability to make use of the training in the classroom; and (d) the effect on undergraduate students in the classroom in terms of compensatory behaviors when confronted by a TA who experiences difficulty in communicating.

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Appendix A

Report of Observed Teacher Behaviors: Behavioral Definitions for Items

I. Provides for student understanding and assimilation of instructional content

1. *Answer students' questions.*

The teacher answers content-related questions asked by student(s).

2. *Asks questions to find out if students understand.*

The teacher asks questions about the content taught in order to find out if students understand what has been said (taught). The question must not be rhetorical. The student does not have to respond, although it should be clear that the teacher expects an answer.

The teacher may initiate this behavior, or it may occur in response to a student's question or comment, or some nonverbal cue from students indicating that they do not understand.

3. *Repeats things when students do not understand.*

The teacher repeats aspects of the content of instruction (previously addressed) that students directly communicate to the teacher that they do not understand, e.g., "Would you repeat that?" "I don't understand that," etc.

4. *Explains something and then stops so that students can ask questions.*

The teacher, after explaining, repeating, or reviewing some aspects of content or responding to a student's question or comment deliberately stops and provides time for students to ask questions about the content of instruction. The teacher may say "Okay?" or "Do you have questions?" prior to pausing.

5. *Explains things simply.*

The teacher makes a visible effort to reduce material to a level at which the student will grasp the point, rather than present the student with a statement without explicating its meaning. The teacher may say, "This means . . .," "This comes down to . . .," "So what we have is simply . . .," "This is what counts. .."

6. *Teaches at a pace appropriate to the topic and to the students.*

The teacher presents material such that his or her speed of delivery provides time for the average student to take notes (including from the blackboard or overhead projector) and ask questions about the material.

7. *Provides time for students to practice (e.g., work problems).*

The teacher, during the class period, provides specific time for students to do written or practical assignments related to the content of instruction. This may take the form of individual or group work. The teacher plays an active (leading) role in the case of group work (i.e., the teacher works examples with student contribution).

8. *Gives students a chance to think about what has been taught.*

The teacher explains some aspects of the content of instruction and then deliberately pauses to provide time for students to think about what has been said. The teacher, after explanation, explicitly tells the students that he or she is providing time to think about what was said.

9. *Shows similarities and differences between things.*

The teacher describes, explains, or shows how two or more things (e.g., ideas, concepts, objects, ways of doing things, etc.) are alike and/or how they differ.

II. Explains/demonstrates how to do the work by use of examples

10. *Shows students how to do the work by use of examples.*

The teacher presents students with written examples (in the form of handouts, transparencies, or blackboard work) and shows the students how to work them with or without student involvement.

11. *Teaches step-by-step.*

The teacher has the content matter of the lesson sequenced in such a way that steps within a problem, between parts of a problem, between parts of a lesson, or the development of course content build only upon previously covered material; a smooth transition from one part of the lesson to another; no fumbling or hesitation.

III. Structures instruction and instructional content/presents content in a logical sequence

12. *Points out what is important for students to learn.*

The teacher deliberately draws students' attention to those aspects of the content of instruction it is important for them to learn. The teacher may say, for example, "It is important for you to know this. . ." "You must understand this . . .," "The rule to learn is . . .," "Remember, the important point is. . . ."

13. *Informs students of the course/lesson objectives.*

The teacher, at the beginning of the course or start of the lesson indicates the content to be covered. The teacher may say, "What I will go over . . .," "The topic today is . . .," "The purpose of our work today is . . .," etc.

14. *Tells students what they are expected to know or should be able to do on completion of instruction.*

The teacher may say, "Now you will be able to work on the examples following chapter six," "This will enable you to work out. . . ."

15. *Summarizes the material presented in class.*

The teacher, on completion of the lesson presentation, gives a summary of the instructional content presented in the lesson.

IV. Establishes rapport with the students

16. *Addresses students by name.*

The teacher, during the class, refers to the student by name when addressing the student or responding to a comment or question from the student.

17. *Praises student contributions.*

The teacher acknowledges that he or she values student contributions by making some agreeable verbal response to the contributions. The teacher may say, "That's a good point," "Yes, thank you," "Thanks for raising that," "Right. Well done," etc.

18. *Encourages student participation.*

The teacher specifically makes statements designed to promote student involvement in the lesson. The teacher may say, "Feel free to interrupt with questions or comments," or, "I'd like you to provide me with some of the answers as we work this problem," etc.

19. *Looks at the class when teaching.*

The teacher generally has his or her face toward the students, taking in all parts of the room, except when writing on the blackboard or overhead projector, at which times the teacher periodically looks toward the students.

V. Spoken word and aids

20. *Pronounces words clearly.*
    The teacher pronounces words in such a way that the student is unlikely to be in doubt as to what the word is; pronunciation difficulties are infrequent and minimal.
21. *Can be clearly heard in the classroom.*
    The teacher modulates his or her voice level such that, regardless of the room size, all students have an opportunity to hear clearly what is said by the teacher.
22. *Makes use of a variety of teaching aids.*
    The teacher, during the lesson, makes use of more than one means of presenting content visually to the students. The teacher may use the blackboard and then hand out material for the students to work on–hand out material and then discuss the material using the blackboard, or illustrate some part of the content through the use of a slide projector or transparency as well as using the blackboard.

Appendix B

Report of Observed Teacher Behaviors: Observers' Instrument

Date: Time: Place: TA: Observer:

13. Informs students of the lesson/course objectives (explicit statement introducing what will take place 0 1

4. Tells students what they are expected to know or should be able to do on completion of lesson (explicit statement from teacher) 0 1

1. Answers students' questions (content related) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Asks questions to find out if students understand (not rhetorical questions; student answers expected) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. Provides time for students to practice (teacher involves students in doing the work) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

16. Addresses students by name 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

17. Praises student contributions (verbal praise, more than a flat "yes" or "okay") 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Repeats things when students do not understand 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Explains something and then stops so that students can ask questions (asks for student feedback and waits) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. Gives students a chance to think about what is taught (explicitly states giving time to think) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. Shows similarities and differences between things (compares/contrasts, points out similarities/differences) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. Shows how to do the work by use of examples (works examples with or without student involvement) 0 1

18. Encourages student participation (explicit statement indicating student involvement expected) 0 1

5. Explains things simply (teacher statements that show attempt to simplify) 0 1

6. Teaches at a pace appropriate to the topic and students (consider the average student taking notes/asking questions) 0 1

11. Teaches step by step (smooth transition from one part of lesson to another; no fumbling or hesitation) 0 1

12. Points out what is important for students to learn (explicit statements drawing students' attention to certain parts of the material) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

15. Summarizes the material presented in class (gives some concluding remarks at the end of the lesson that summarize the main points) 0 1

19. Looks at the class when teaching (teacher pays attention generally to all parts of the room) 0 1

20. Pronounces words clearly (minimal, infrequent pronunciation difficulties) 0 1

21. Can be clearly heard in all parts of the classroom (can be heard wherever the students are sitting) 0 1

22. Makes use of a variety of teaching aids (uses more than one visual aid such as board, handout, transparency) 0 1

Brian Davis is Principal Researcher, Ontario Teachers' Association.

Standard Oral Proficiency Tests for International Graduate Teaching Assistants

Jeff Mellor

Introduction

In this paper, I have three main goals. First, I would like to provide a general introduction to oral proficiency testing. For this purpose, I will discuss the Oral Proficiency Interview test first developed in the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) of the United States Department of State, the test that still provides the best comprehensive assessment of oral proficiency. Second, I would like to compare and contrast two tests marketed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) for assessing oral proficiency in English: (a) the Test of Spoken English (TSE), and (b) the Speaking Proficiency in English Assessment Kit (or SPEAK Test). I intend to show how these tests derive from the FSI interview test and how they compare with one another. Lastly, I would like to offer a few general observations about running a program using these instruments to test the oral proficiency in English of international teaching assistants (ITAs). These observations derive both from my perspective as a faculty member in German and from my experience in running such a program at the University of Tennessee for the past several years.

Origin of Oral Proficiency Testing

The oral proficiency interview test originated from pragmatic needs and was developed empirically. Linguistic theory is only now beginning to address many of the interesting theoretical questions it raises. Following World War II, there was a marked increase in the need of government personnel with functional foreign language skills, and many of the still-common descriptions of language proficiency ("grew up speaking X," "near-native proficiency in X," "fluent X," "majored in X in college") proved to be unreliable yardsticks for assessing the suitability of a particular person for a particular set of tasks to be performed in a particular language. Even persons who had "grown up speaking X" were not always able to perform linguistically the tasks to which they might be assigned. Sometimes, for example, they could in fact freely discuss a variety of topics involving everyday life in the home but were at a loss when negotiating sticky points in a consular treaty.

To solve the problem of mismatch of skills to tasks, the State Department conducted a study in the 1950s in which persons successfully functioning in a variety of roles were studied and classified. Each classified range of linguistic proficiency was described in a brief line. These one-line descriptions formed the basis for the FSI descriptions familiar to many. The scale began at zero and extended to 5. The highest part of each range from 0 to 4 was designated by a plus and also had its own one-line description. Figure 1 shows these descriptions for all but levels 3+ and 4+.

Because they were summaries, the one-line descriptions omitted a great deal of detail known to the persons who conducted the original study but not to others who lacked this breadth of field observation. Subsequently, much detail has been reintroduced in systematic elaborations of the level descriptions. Nevertheless, the original one-liners remain valid and stand at the head of each level description. Since the 1950s, this oral proficiency scale has been adopted by all federal military, civilian, and intelligence agencies where descriptions of second-language oral proficiency are required. As a result, the FSI scale is now officially known as the

Fig. 1: EARLY DESCRIPTIONS OF ORAL PROFICIENCY: THE FSI "ONE-LINER" DESCRIPTIONS

0+	Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances
1	Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements
1+	Able to satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands
2	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements
2+	Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence
3	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics
4	Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels pertinent to professional needs
5	Speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker

Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale. Figure 2 (see next page) shows the more elaborate ILR descriptions of recent years and the parallel American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)/ETS counterparts.

Developments in Oral Proficiency Testing outside Government

The early 1960s marked the adoption of the ILR scale outside the government. Because Peace Corps volunteers had to be trained in foreign languages for their assignments abroad, their oral proficiency needed to be tested. To keep the Peace

Figure 2. Comparison of the ILR and ACTFL-ETS Oral Proficiency Scales

ACADEMIC (ACTFL/ETS) RATING SCALE	GOVERNMENT (ILR) RATING SCALE
LEVEL: 0 **No ability whatsoever in the language.**	LEVEL: 0 **No functional ability in the language.**
LEVEL: NOVICE LOW **Unable to function in the spoken language.** Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Essentially no communicative ability.	
LEVEL: NOVICE MID **Able to operate only in a very limited capacity within very predictable areas of need.** Vocabulary limited to that necessary to express simple elementary needs and basic courtesy formulae. Syntax is fragmented, inflections and word endings frequently omitted, confused, or distorted, and the majority of utterances consists of isolated words or short formulae. Utterances do not show evidence of creating with language or being able to cope with the simplest situations. They are marked by repetition of an interlocutor's words as well as by frequent long pauses. Pronunciation is frequently unintelligible and is strongly influenced by first language. Can be understood only with difficulty, even by persons such as teachers who are used to speaking with non-native speakers.	
LEVEL: NOVICE HIGH **Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances.** There is no real autonomy of expression, although there are some emerging signs of spontaneity and flexibility. There is a slight increase in utterance length, but frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words may still occur. Can ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy only where this involves short memorized utterances or formulae. Most utterances are telegraphic and word endings are often omitted, confused, or distorted. Vocabulary is limited to areas of immediate survival needs. Can produce most phonemes, but when they are combined in words or groups of words, errors are frequent, and, in spite of repetition, may severely inhibit communication even with persons used to dealing with such learners. Little development in stress and intonation is evident.	LEVEL: 0+* **Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances.** There is no real autonomy of expression, although there may be some emerging signs of spontaneity and flexibility. There is a slight increase in utterance length, but frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words still occur. Can ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy only where this involves short memorized utterances or formulae. Most utterances are telegraphic and word endings (both inflectional and non-inflectional) are often omitted, confused, or distorted. Vocabulary is limited to areas of immediate survival needs. Can differentiate most phonemes, but when they are combined in words or groups of words, errors are frequent, and, even with repetition, may severely inhibit communication even with persons used to dealing with such learners. Little development in stress and intonation is evident. * There are only minor differences between the two descriptions at this level.
LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE LOW **Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements.** In areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements, and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations. When asked to do so, is able to formulate some questions with limited constructions and much inaccuracy. Almost every utterance contains fractured syntax and other grammatical errors. Vocabulary inadequate to express anything but the most elementary needs. Strong interference from L1 occurs in articulation, stress, and intonation. Misunderstandings frequently arise from limited vocabulary and grammar and erroneous phonology but, with repetition, can generally be understood by native speakers in regular contact with foreigners attempting to speak their language. Little precision in information conveyed owing to tentative state of grammatical development and little or no use of modifiers.	LEVEL: 1 **Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements.** Can ask and answer questions on very familiar topics; within the scope of the very limited language experience can understand simple questions and statements, allowing for slowed speech, repetition, or paraphrase; speaking vocabulary inadequate to express anything but the most elementary needs; errors in pronunciation and grammar are frequent, but can be understood by a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners attempting to speak the language; while topics which are "very familiar" and elementary needs vary considerably from individual to individual, any person at the S-1 level should be able to order a simple meal, ask for shelter or lodging, ask and give simple directions, make purchases, and tell time.
LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE MID **Able to satisfy some survival needs and some limited social demands.** Some evidence of grammatical accuracy in basic constructions, e.g., subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement, some notion of inflection. Vocabulary permits discussion of topics beyond basic survival needs, e.g., personal history, leisure time activities. Is able to formulate some questions when asked to do so.	

Figure 2. (continued) Comparison of the ILR and ACTFL-ETS Oral Proficiency Scales

ACADEMIC (ACTFL/ETS) RATING SCALE	GOVERNMENT (ILR) RATING SCALE
LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE HIGH **Able to satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands.** Developing flexibility in a range of circumstances beyond immediate survival needs. Shows spontaneity in language production, but fluency is very uneven. Can initiate and sustain a general conversation. Limited vocabulary range necessitates much hesitation and circumlocution. The commoner tense forms occur, but errors are frequent in formation and selection. Can use most question forms. While some word order is established, errors still occur in more complex patterns. Cannot sustain coherent structures in longer utterances or unfamiliar situations. Ability to describe and give precise information is limited. Aware of basic cohesive features (e.g., pronouns, verb inflections), but many are unreliable, especially if less immediate in reference. Extended discourse is largely a series of short, discrete utterances. Articulation is comprehensible to native speakers used to dealing with foreigners, and can combine most phonemes with reasonable comprehensibility, but still has difficulty in producing certain sounds, in certain positions, or in certain combinations, and speech will usually be labored. Still has to repeat utterances frequently to be understood by the general public. Able to produce narration in either past or future.	LEVEL: 1+ **Able to satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands.** Developing flexibility in a range of circumstances beyond immediate survival needs. Shows some spontaneity in language production, but fluency is very uneven. Can initiate and sustain a general conversation. Limited vocabulary range necessitates much hesitation and circumlocution. The commoner tense forms occur, but errors are frequent in formation and selection. Can use most question forms. While some word order is established, errors still occur in more complex patterns. Cannot sustain coherent structures in longer utterances or unfamiliar situations. Ability to describe and give precise information is limited. Aware of basic cohesive features (e.g., pronouns, verb inflections), but many are unreliable, especially if less immediate in reference. Extended discourse is largely a series of short, discrete utterances. Articulation is comprehensible to native speakers used to dealing with foreigners, and can combine most phonemes with reasonable comprehensibility, but still has difficulty in producing certain sounds in certain positions or in certain combinations, and speech will usually be labored. Still has to repeat utterances frequently to be understood by the general public. Able to produce narration in either past or future.
ADVANCED **Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements.** Can handle with confidence, but not with familiarity, most social situations including introductions and casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information; can handle limited work requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties. Has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond simply with some circumlocutions; accent, though often quite faulty, is intelligible; can handle elementary constructions quite accurately, but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar.	LEVEL: 2 **Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements.** Can handle with confidence, but not with facility, most social situations including introductions and casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information; can handle limited work requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties. Has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond simply with some circumlocutions; accent, though often quite faulty, is intelligible; can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately, but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar.
ADVANCED PLUS **Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence.** Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech, but under tension or pressure language may break down. Weaknesses or unevenness in one of the foregoing or in pronunciation result in occasional miscommunication. Areas of weakness range from simple constructions such as plurals, articles, prepositions, and negatives to more complex structures such as tense usage, passive constructions, word order, and relative clauses. Normally controls general vocabulary with some grouping for everyday vocabulary still evident.	LEVEL: 2+ **Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence.** Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech, but under tension or pressure, language may break down. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both. Weaknesses or unevenness in one of the foregoing or in pronunciation result in occasional miscommunication. Areas of weakness range from simple constructions such as tense usage, passive constructions, word order, and relative clauses. Normally controls general vocabulary with some groping for everyday vocabulary still evident. Shows some evidence of target language sociolinguistics and culture.
SUPERIOR ALL PERFORMANCE ABOVE ADVANCED PLUS IS RATED AS SUPERIOR	LEVEL: 3 **Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.** Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease; comprehension is quite complete for a normal rate of speech; vocabulary is broad enough that he rarely has to grope for a word; accent may be obviously foreign; control of grammar good; errors never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.
	LEVEL: 4 REPRESENTATIONAL LEVEL **Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs.** Can understand and participate in any conversation within the range of own personal and professional experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary; would rarely be taken for a native speaker, but can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar situations; errors of pronunciation and grammar quite rare; can handle informal interpreting from and into the language.
	LEVEL: 5 NATIVE **Speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.** Has complete fluency in the language such that speech on all levels is fully accepted by educated native speakers in all of its features, including breadth of vocabulary and idiom.

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Corps separate from military and intelligence agencies, the government contracted with ETS to test Peace Corps volunteers.

Since the late 1970s, ETS gave additional impetus to the adoption of the ILR scale for foreign language study in the United States. Together with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), ETS adapted the ILR scale for use in schools and colleges in the United States. The ACTFL/ETS scale preserves the major divisions on the lower end of the ILR scale and subdivides them according to customary ILR practice. Thus, as Figure 2 indicates, ILR Level 0 = ACTFL/ETS *Novice*, ILR Level 1 = ACTFL/ETS *Intermediate*, and ILR Level 2 = ACTFL/ETS *Advanced*. The upper end of the scale, ILR Levels 3 to 5, achievement of which normally requires years of residence and higher education in a foreign setting, is not differentiated and is called *Superior* on the ACTFL/ETS scale.

ACTFL is currently vigorously pursuing a long-range training and certification program for testers in a variety of languages. In its 1983 report, *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do* (College Entrance Examination Board, 1983), the College Board of ETS designated ILR Level 1 in a foreign language as the minimum college entrance requirement from high school. In a parallel development, the College Board Achievement Tests in foreign languages and the Advanced Placement Tests are beginning to test proficiency levels as defined on the ACTFL/ETS scale.

Characteristic Speech Functions of ILR Levels 0+ through 5

What functions are characteristic of the different ILR Levels? All the level descriptions are made with reference to the kind of speech an educated native speaker professional might use in any particular situation. Each level below 5 is deficient in some respect with reference to this criterion. At the lowest levels, the deficiencies are very great.

At Level 0+, functional communication is limited to fixed phrases, words, and sentences that the candidate has memorized. The candidate is still unable to recombine these bits of language into new functional utterances, e.g., a person who knows that "Sprechen Sie Deutsch?" means "Do you speak German?" but who answers "Ik no Sprechen Sie Deutsch?" to a reply in German may be a 0+ in German, provided he or she has enough such phrases and words to communicate in a variety of situations.

ILR Level 1 represents an important transformation in the ability of the candidate to communicate. A Level 1 speaker can communicate functionally, that is, knows enough language to satisfy the variety of tasks needed for short-term survival in a foreign language: finding lodging, ordering food, using the telephone, making appointments, finding and making use of transportation, understanding directions, obtaining necessities in stores, post offices, banks, etc. At Level 1, a speaker creates out of the available vocabulary and grammar original sentences that can be understood by a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners in the language. But, though Level 1 speakers can get or give concrete facts by asking or answering questions, they still are not freely participative and cannot sustain a casual exchange of small talk.

ILR Level 2 speakers also demonstrate a marked increase in communicative power. Level 2 speakers can deal linguistically with a great variety of common complications in survival tasks, i.e., rerouting a round-trip flight through a stopover city and obtaining the best fare while doing so. Level 2 speakers talk in paragraphs, can freely participate in casual conversations with native speakers, and can be readily understood by native speakers not used to dealing with foreigners. Even so, a Level 2 speaker can still miscommunicate, e.g., "The police instigated the recent crime wave" instead of, "The police investigated the recent crime wave." At Level 2, speakers are able to function successfully in a great number of jobs where language use centers on the *concrete* subject matter pertinent to job tasks. Level 2 speakers narrate in the past, present, and future and give comprehensible descriptions of complex concrete things such as a heating-air conditioning control panel, the procedures for filing documents, the fastest route to Wall Street from La Guardia, or a fuel injection system, i.e., job-related speech for building maintenance person, file clerk, cab driver, garage mechanic, etc. Tasks a Level 2 cannot yet perform include giving an abstract or hypothetical *justification* or *analysis* of the things they can *describe.*

Because of its special importance for a program evaluating the ability of a person to teach his or her own field in English, the 2+ level will be discussed here. The plus level signifies that the candidate controls 60% or more of the functions of the next higher level, but does not reliably control them all. Thus, at Level 2+, for example, the candidates can demonstrate an emergent ability to deal with abstract topics in their own special field of competence, while a Level 2 functions successfully only with concrete topics, even in his or her own field. The implications for teaching assistants are obvious, since they presumably must be able to deal with both concrete and abstract topics in the fields they teach.

Level 3 speakers demonstrate full professional capacity in the language. They command even more concrete language than a Level 2 speaker and, in addition, can provide lengthy, coherent, structured abstract discourse when justifying a point of view or hypothesizing about a situation. Such speakers frequently construct their arguments around extended similes, metaphors, and the like. Level 3 speakers do not miscommunicate and make so few errors in basic grammar that they do not unintentionally obscure their intended meaning. Level 3 speakers are freely able to participate in a wide range of professional tasks one might expect of college-trained personnel: briefing a professional group of fellow accountants on changes in the tax laws, giving expert testimony in court, etc.

Level 4 speakers are even more versatile. The distinguishing characteristic of a Level 4 speaker is the ability to tailor speech to the audience, whether that be a small child distressed by an accident, an insistent colleague in faculty senate debate, a busy garage mechanic who "can't" fix the car before the planned Labor Day weekend, a troubled patient needing advice but ready to rebel at a hint of disdain, or one's opposite at the negotiating table on a crucial point.

Level 5 speakers pass for educated native speakers with professional careers. In any situation, they speak just as educated native speakers might: no accent, no stilted, out-of-place, or off-base grammar or expressions revealing that this is not their native language.

Characteristics of the ILR Oral Proficiency Test

The ILR Oral Proficiency Test is a 10- to 30-minute interview designed to elicit speech samples in the ranges and of the types described in the one-line level descriptions and their elaborations. In the government setting, there are two interviewers and one candidate. The ACTFL/ETS interview is conducted with one interviewer and one candidate.

The oral interview directly demonstrates the speech skill of the candidate by assessing what the candidate can and cannot say in the interview. Unlike pencil and paper tests, it does not rely on skill transfer or statistical probability to state that the candidate is able to perform the speech tasks for a certain level, since these tasks will appear on the interview tape. In the terminology of test makers, it provides a *valid* measurement of speaking, since it calls for the production of what it purports to test. Similarly, the oral interview provides a *reliable* measurement of oral proficiency. Trained testers consistently rate the same interview within the same major boundaries, though differences of one plus-point, i.e., 2 vs. 2+, may sometimes occur.

The oral interview is criterion-referenced, that is, the rating is determined by the match of the candidate's performance to the description of each level. Likewise, the oral interview is a proficiency test, not an achievement test. Achievement tests measure the mastery of a set corpus of material. The oral proficiency scale is predicated on the speech of an educated native speaker professional, which is indefinitely broad and varied.

The test maintains score stability from one administration to the next, not by a fixed group of questions or a fixed list of topics, but by an assembled set of functional tasks, each elicited by a specific question type. For example, the questions:

- Where do you live?
- When does the next bus leave?
- Who does your hair?
- How far is it to the next gas station?

all elicit a specific piece of concrete information. The ability to ask and answer questions of this sort is among the hallmarks of the Level 1 speaker. Seen from the point of view of question type, these items are identical. Similarly, the questions:

- What did you do yesterday between your coffee break and lunch?
- What did you do on your summer vacation?
- What happened in the third quarter of the football game?
- What were you doing when President Kennedy was assassinated?

all demand a response that narrates a fixed series of past events. Any of these questions is appropriate for establishing the ability of a speaker to perform one of the Level 2 tasks, past narration.

The oral interview is a global integrative test; it is not scored by a sum of individual items. In each case, the interviewers measure the total impression of the candidate's performance, its pattern or gestalt, against the listed criteria for each level to judge if the tasks were performed. For example, given the question, "What kind of people work in your office?," the answer "All kind people work at our place; we have two Chinese, four Frenchman, couple Italian, and Pole," could be deemed a successful functional Level 1 response, even though "all kind people," taken at face value, means something quite different than evidently intended, and even though the signals of singular and plural are quite unreliable in the sentence. (This level of inaccuracy would, however, prevent this person from being classed as a Level 3 speaker.) Understanding this overall impression of functionality in the oral interview is essential to understanding its global integrative nature. Thus, isolated flashes of brilliance not supported by a pattern of performance at a given level do not determine the final impression. Momentary lapses, so long as they do not establish a pattern of weakness, are also disregarded.

Interview Structure

While the interview appears to the casual observer to be a free conversation, it has a clear four-phase structure, as seen in Figure 3. In the warm-up phase, the interviewers begin with customary conversational preliminaries not intended to challenge the candidates but to renew their acquaintance with the language and accustom them to hearing and speaking it again. At the same time, the interviewers do monitor the kind of replies the candidate gives to the warm-up questions because these answers suggest how to begin the second phase of the interview, the level check.

Fig. 3: Four Stages of the Oral Proficiency Interview

A WARM-UP:	Renew acquaintance with the language, accustom candidates to hearing the language again, make preliminary judgment about the range of a candidate
B LEVEL CHECK:	Find the highest level at which a candidate can sustain a speaking performance
C PROBES:	Attempt to elicit higher level behavior than a candidate can sustain, probe candidate's performance to the point of *LINGUISTIC BREAKDOWN*
D WIND-DOWN:	Resume speech at a level the candidate can sustain, high enough to give candidate a feeling of confidence at his/her achievement

The purpose of the level check is to find the highest level at which a candidate can sustain a speaking performance. In the level check, the interviewers attempt systematically to elicit the functions characteristic of the level by choosing question types that demand these functions in reply.

As the interviewers complete the level check for one level, they move to the next higher level to see if the candidate also can function successfully there. This process is called *probing* and constitutes the third phase of the interview. Probes to the next level often reveal continued success in all the functions there. In this case, the probes constitute a level check at the next higher level, and testers probe still higher until what is known as *linguistic breakdown* is observed.

Linguistic breakdown takes many forms, all of which can be defined as the loss of communicative power of speech. Some speakers simply fall silent at a question that is too demanding. Others continue to produce a flow of words, but these words cease introducing additional information; they merely recycle the same idea again and again. Often candidates begin to speak haltingly and make several unsuccessful attempts to begin a sentence, each time falling back to regroup. During linguistic breakdown, grammatical structures and pronunciation that the candidate previously had under control frequently deteriorate. Finally, some candidates report linguistic breakdown by saying something like, "I'm sorry, I know what I want to say, but I just don't know how to say it in X."

Just as the level check reveals a pattern of ability to perform, the probes must reveal a pattern of inability to perform. It is therefore essential that the candidate have several chances to address probes containing questions that led to linguistic breakdown once.

Once the probes have established the ceiling above which the candidate cannot successfully function, the interviewers begin the fourth phase of the interview, the wind-down. Here they resume conversation at the highest level the candidate is able to sustain and continue the interview long enough for the candidate to regain confidence and establish a feeling of achievement before concluding the discussion.

Though the oral proficiency interview in the ILR or ACTFL/ETS version is a very accurate and proven instrument, it is very expensive to administer, since it requires a large number of highly trained personnel relative to the numbers of candidates to be tested and a relatively long time to administer. These drawbacks are undoubtedly the principal reasons it is not used to test the spoken English of large numbers of ITAs. Nevertheless, training in the oral proficiency interview is essential for a person administering a testing program using the SPEAK Test. Certified training in the oral proficiency interview establishes a solid basis of authoritative knowledge about oral proficiency that enables the testing administrator to educate professorial staff and university administrators about oral proficiency, to train test raters accurately and reliably, and to give sound and focused remedial advice to ITAs who need to improve their spoken English.

The Test of Spoken English (TSE) and the SPEAK Assessment Kit

Drawing on its experience with the oral proficiency interview, ETS developed the TSE as an adjunct to the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL test), which does not directly measure the ability to speak English. The TSE is designed to provide an assessment of a candidate's spoken English and, as the comparison in the next section will show, is directly inspired in form and structure by the ILR oral proficiency interview test. The SPEAK Test, which uses retired TSE test versions, is identical to the TSE in form.

The TSE is administered around the world at designated test centers under the supervision of ETS. The test tapes are graded centrally and the scores are backed by ETS. The SPEAK kit consists of retired TSE test forms (i.e., the test master tape and booklets), scoring sheets, prerated sample test tapes, and a training manual. Because the scoring process and the tests themselves are no longer under central control of ETS, no guarantee is made for the accuracy of SPEAK scores. The accuracy of SPEAK scores thus relies squarely on the expertise and precision of the trainer, i.e., presumably the administrator of a testing program. Given the administrative and even legal complications that could arise around a testing program for ITAs, it is simply prudent that this trainer have certified expertise in oral proficiency testing.

Overall Comparison of the TSE and the Oral Proficiency Interview

The TSE is essentially parallel in structure to the oral interview. It begins with a warm-up, has level checks and probes, and ends with a wind-down. Unlike the oral interview, it is a canned test. The questions are played to a candidate over a tape and the candidate's responses are recorded on tape. Test takers I have talked to express nearly universal dislike of the recording machines in the test setup. They say they feel under greater pressure than in direct conversation with another real person. I suggest they try to imagine they are talking to a real but unseen person who is listening to their every word (because in fact they are). It is important to consider that if any deterioration of a candidate's speech occurs in this high-pressure situation this may reflect the deterioration liable to arise when an ITA first enters an American classroom to teach, another high-pressure situation. Like any canned test, the TSE is inflexible and can be compromised. This is especially true of the three available SPEAK Test forms, which may be given repeatedly from year to year. As further analysis will show, the TSE/SPEAK test attempts to elicit functions especially in the range 1+ to 3. It is not a particularly useful instrument for very low-level or very high-level speakers.

The functions in the range 1+ to 3 are the prime focus of people interested in testing the suitability of speech of ITAs, for it is at Level 2 that the ability to be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with foreigners emerges, as does the ability to deal with concrete job-related topics. At 2+, the ability to discuss one's own field abstractly emerges, whereas at Level 3, a broad ability to abstract and function in professional roles is demonstrated.

Analysis of the TSE/SPEAK Test Structure

The TSE/SPEAK Test consists of seven sections. (The illustrations and questions in this section are drawn from Educational Testing Service's *SPEAK Examinee Handbook and Sample Questions*. In the actual test, there are four questions in Section One and ten questions in Section Three, but no other differences.) In Section One, the candidate is asked, "What is your name?" and "How many brothers and sisters do you have?" These questions ask for everyday concrete facts, i.e., Level 1 tasks. This section is not graded and consequently fulfills much the same function as the warm-up period in an oral interview.

Section Two gives the candidate one minute to study a short paragraph of general prose and then asks the candidate to read the paragraph aloud with expression, mindful that the grade depends on proper pronunciation and clear speech. This minicheck of pronunciation has no precise analog in the oral interview, but it does help to isolate pronunciation clearly at one point in the test. Since the ability to communicate with native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with foreigners distinguishes a Level 2 speaker from a Level 1 speaker, it is evident that this minicheck is designed in part to help discover this difference. The paragraph in this section is representative of textbook prose one might encounter in many classrooms and so this pronunciation check is oriented to tasks an ITA might have to perform in class. Research on the acceptability of an ITA's performance in the classroom indicates that pronunciation is the most important factor determining overall rating of ITAs (Hinofotis & Bailey, 1981; Bailey, 1983).

Section Three consists of incomplete sentences, "Whenever John comes home . . .," "Before we left for class . . .," and "Because the restaurant is closed. . . ." Students are asked to read the first half aloud and supply any logical and grammatically correct completion to the sentence that comes to mind. Students are given about 10 seconds to read and complete the sentences and are then cued to begin the next. Like Section Two, Section Three has no direct counterpart in the oral interview, but it does aim at an important distinction between levels, grammatical accuracy. Whereas a Level 2 speaker can still make quite a number of errors in basic grammatical structures, these mistakes are absent from the speech of a Level 3 speaker. The ability to produce grammatically correct completions on the spur of the moment helps to reveal this difference.

In Section Four, the candidates are asked to study a series of pictures telling a simple story. After one minute's study, they are then given one minute to tell the story that the pictures show, beginning with the words "One day last week . . ." This is a straightforward check of the Level 2 function of narration of a series of concrete events in the past.

In Section Five, the candidates study a single picture for one minute before being asked questions about it. The picture in the sample booklet shows a car backing out of a driveway, a small bicycle lying on the pavement under the back bumper of the car, and a boy about 10 years old behind the car and to its left holding his arms (palms forward, fingers straight up) outstretched in the direction of the driver.

With about 15 seconds between questions, the following four questions are asked: "Where is this scene taking place?," "What has just happened?," "What will the boy probably do after this?," and "How could this situation have been prevented?" The first question asks for concrete information (Level 1), but often elicits description (Level 2) of the scene from higher level speakers. The second question asks for narration in the past. The third question asks for narration in the future. Simple past and future narration are Level 2 tasks. However, both questions ask about events not immediately observable in the picture. To the extent these questions probe beyond the concrete reality visible in the picture, they ask for speech containing inference and hypothetical discussion, the marks of a Level 3 speaker. The last question directly requires the speaker to hypothesize and is a straight Level 3 probe. Section Five thus tests most strongly at Levels 2 and 3.

Section Six does not operate from visible cues. Here the candidate is asked three questions and given between 45 and 60 seconds to respond as fully as time permits. The questions are: "Describe the things that make a perfect day," "Describe a telephone in detail," and "What is your opinion of the problem of automobile pollution?" The description questions ask for this Level 2 function in two different content areas under control of Level 2 speakers, that of personal interests and that of concrete everyday objects. The final question asks for an extended justification of opinion. Ability to support an opinion with a cogent set of abstract arguments is a Level 3 task.

Section Seven asks the candidate to play the role of a teacher meeting a class for the first time and is directly oriented to the expected role of an ITA. The candidate is given a list of information about the class, asked to study it for one minute, and then asked to pass this information on to the class. Communicating concrete information of this sort is something that a Level 1 speaker does in a primitive fashion. Doing so in paragraphs would characterize a Level 2 speaker. Speakers at higher levels show an awareness of the cultural expectations of American students in this situation and speak accordingly. Thus, Section Seven functions as a wind-down for all but the very weakest candidates, those below Level 1. At Levels 1 and higher, Section Seven provides the respite and opportunity to regain composure that the wind-down is designed to give in an oral interview.

In short, the TSE/SPEAK Test can provide useful information on the linguistic ability of prospective ITAs. It focuses on the substantive functions necessary for teaching, including the ability to handle a great range of concrete subject areas and the ability to hypothesize and present abstract and theoretical justifications for given circumstances. The test is suited for mass administration and thus significantly lowers the cost of testing and, given a sufficient number of trained raters, shortens the time by which the results can be made available. Provided the scores are accurate and the test has not been compromised, this is important information.

At the same time, it should be stressed that language alone does not determine success or failure in the classroom. It is no secret that there are many native speakers of English who are poor teachers. Nonnative speakers entering American classrooms will undoubtedly vary as widely in their ability to teach. ITAs, like American TAs, normally lack significant classroom experience and can, like American TAs, benefit immensely from orientation and training sessions addressing this gap. In addition, even ITAs with excellent English often need additional information on the expectations of American undergraduates and typical classroom etiquette.

Finally, though the SPEAK Test and TSE are identical, there are other considerations governing a choice between them. Before the SPEAK program at Tennessee was established, we considered requiring the submission of TSE scores at application time. This policy was not adopted because a number of departments felt the costs might discourage a number of qualified applicants. Also, in some countries, currency restrictions make it impossible for a student to take both the TOEFL test and the TSE. One alternative is for the institution or the department to subsidize the taking of the TSE, but it may be difficult to justify this cost, since the score may then be used for entrance to a competing institution. At Tennessee, we accept TSE scores in lieu of SPEAK scores generated on campus, but we do not require them.

General Observations Regarding an ITA Testing Program

Time does not permit more than a few general observations about constructing and running a testing program. My observations are based on several years' experience coordinating a SPEAK Testing Program in which just under 100 tests are administered yearly, the majority before the autumn term.

The observations easily reduce to three platitudes:

1. Be as competent as you can be.
2. Make sure there is a strong institutional commitment to establishing a testing program before getting involved.
3. Keep the program balanced between testing, remediation, and training, and make sure it meets the needs of the undergraduates who are paying for instruction, the departments that need to offer courses, and the ITAs who are to be tested.

Competence

I addressed this issue above. The quality of information the tests yield rests on careful training. Though ETS provides a good training manual with the SPEAK Test, oral proficiency training provides a depth of background information of inestimable value in dealing with the various constituencies of a testing program. Finally, in a litigious age, it is important to have the security of certification in oral proficiency testing.

Costs

It is important for a test administrator to feel that the institution will commit the means to run the program properly. One important cost is that of providing and training staff. Training costs include providing oral proficiency training for the administrator, with tuition at $495, plus transportation to the training site, and five days room and board. There are also some posttraining costs. Further allowance must be made to provide sufficient time to train a rating staff properly. I have found that 10 to 15 one-hour weekly meetings provides trained raters who are accurate, reliable, and stable in their ratings. At Tennessee, I have trained a number of graduate students in Audiology and Speech Pathology as raters. They are permitted to count some of this time against required lab time and, as a result, training costs are reduced.

Continuing costs for staff need to be considered. Often the testing program is carried out just before the beginning of the term. This means it can be hard to induce occasional raters to be present without a financial incentive. Faculty members get extra service pay for work performed outside normal duty times, unless they are willing to accept a reduction in teaching load in return. Permanent staff used only sporadically are too expensive for most institutions to consider, so permanent staff would have to be engaged in ongoing work such as remedial instruction programs for ITAs with low scores.

Another potential cost of a testing program is that it may result in the reduction of the number of course sections that can be offered. Aside from denying potential registrants an opportunity to learn, FTEs may also be reduced. An ITA whose visa is dependent on the assistantship specified in his or her immigration papers, as many are, will be deported if denied that assistantship. Testing spoken English can thus raise the cost of instruction significantly in smaller departments if an ITA is removed from the teaching force.

Balance

It is important that a testing program be balanced because it meets several different needs. Though such programs often result from pressure from American undergraduates through alumni or legislators, they must also meet the needs of international students and of departments. If they do not, international students will be discouraged from applying, and departments in some fields will be unable to cover the sections in its undergraduate instructional program.

Whatever actions are undertaken, they need to be done with as much consultation as possible. At Tennessee, all department heads and TA supervisors were invited to an oral proficiency orientation session and asked to discuss their instructional needs based on the videotaped samples of speech they had seen. They were also asked to assess the rated SPEAK tape answers on a tape supplied for this purpose by ETS. Based on their input and the variety of instructional roles they described, a graduated scale of scores was proposed. All active ITAs were tested and the impact of the proposed scores was assessed before final recommendations were made.

Similarly, each autumn incoming ITAs are given an orientation to the SPEAK Program and test at a reception in International House at Tennessee. They leave the session knowing that certification by the SPEAK Test gives them recognized institutional status and shields them from invidious accusations about inadequate English and that, whatever their SPEAK score, they can expect consultation and help in improving their spoken English in the future.

The choice of an administrative home and staff for a testing program can contribute strongly to the perception of balance. Among the important sources of staff include not only the English department and ESL program, but also faculty in foreign language, curriculum and instruction (the foreign language or ESL methods specialist), linguistics, and audiology and speech pathology. It may help to locate the testing program on neutral territory outside a specific department. At Tennessee, the SPEAK Testing Program is housed in the Learning Research Center, which houses a number of other programs involving institutional research and instructional evaluation and improvement. If the test is administered through a unit that also administers remedial English language instruction or runs the TA orientation program, it could be perceived as a device for boosting budgets rather than as a genuine evaluation process.

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Jeff Mellor is Coordinator of the SPEAK Testing Program at The University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

Screening International TAs for Oral English Proficiency

John S. Eck

Many state legislatures, including Ohio's, have passed laws requiring that all state supported institutions establish a program to:

1. Assess the oral English language proficiency of all international teaching assistants (TAs) providing classroom instruction; and
2. Ensure that TAs who are not orally proficient in the English language attain such proficiency prior to providing classroom instruction.

The University of Toledo Graduate School has established a screening process for all new international TAs that is responsive to the enacted legislation and sensitive to the international TAs being tested, and that incorporates input from those components of the university community that are directly affected by the decision on the readiness of the TA to assume classroom responsibility.

The screening process consists of requesting all new TAs to make a short presentation (five to eight minutes) before the screening committee on a topic in their fields that might be appropriate for students at the level of the course they may be teaching. The TA is informed in advance of the screening to prepare a short presentation for the committee. If a TA is unprepared to do this, the screening committee asks the TA to describe his or her background and interest in the particular discipline in which he or she will be teaching. The object of the presentation is to allow these TAs to communicate materials in their areas that incorporate some of the technical terminology and jargon commonly used in the field. In addition, the TAs are required to respond to questions, thereby testing their aural comprehension. The desired outcome of the screening process is to determine whether, in the judgment of the committee, the TAs can function effectively in their assigned teaching duties.

Prior to the presentations the TA is informed that the decision by the committee will not affect the TA's assistantship for that year. Also, the TA is made aware that a course is available to help remedy any deficiencies in English pronunciation, pedagogic style, or cultural awareness that may show up during the screening interview. This course is supported by the university and there is no charge to the TA or the TA's department. To allow the screening process to take place in as nonthreatening an atmosphere as possible under such circumstances, it is important that the TA be made aware beforehand of the possible outcomes of the screening and know that these outcomes pose no immediate threat to either graduate or financial status.

In order for the screening process to be considered creditable by all segments of the university community, the screening committee must represent all of the interested parties. These include two representatives from the undergraduate student body, selected by the student government association, a faculty representative from the TA's department, a person with linguistic training in English as a Second Language, an international graduate student with prior teaching experience at the university, and a faculty member representing the Graduate School.

The TA being screened is judged in the areas of verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and auxiliary considerations such as organization, use of blackboard, etc. A sample rating sheet, completed by every committee member for each TA, is below:

Rater ____

RATING SHEET FOR FOREIGN TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Department:

Name of Teaching Assistant:

Student Number:

3	2	1	Cannot Determine	
				VERBAL COMMUNICATION Pronunciation
				Auditory Aspects - pitch, volume, rate, clarity
				Fluency
				Ability to understand and answer questions
				Overall aural comprehension
				Overall speaking ability
				NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION Visual aspects (posture, poise, eye contact, facial expression, gestures)
				AUXILIARY CONSIDERATIONS Organization (initiating lesson, content, ending lesson)
				Ability to explain and clarify
				Use of blackboard

Final Recommendation: This candidate should (circle one)
3 - teach without further training
2 - teach concurrent with training
1 - not teach until have training

COMMENTS:

Not all of the areas judged are afforded equal weight; however, the data are collected in order to help the department or the instructor of the TA training course to better assist the TA to overcome the perceived deficiencies. The net result of the screening process is to place the TA into one of three categories:

1. TA cannot have classroom responsibility without completing further training;
2. TA can have classroom responsibility but must concurrently enroll in TA training course; or
3. TA can have classroom responsibility with no further training.

Of the 36 TAs screened prior to the beginning of the autumn quarter, 23 were placed in category 3, 10 in category 2, and 3 in category 1. The process was judged to be eminently fair by the faculty, undergraduate student body, and the representatives of the Graduate Student Association. The undergraduate student committee members were impressed by the overall English speaking ability of the TAs and the university's commitment to ensure that those not passing the screening would be given the necessary instruction to become effective teachers. The faculty, especially the representative from the TA's department, was relieved that the judgment was made in an objective manner by a committee that included undergraduates. The graduate students on the committee were the most demanding in that they generally felt that the TA would benefit from the TA training program and, therefore, were more reluctant than the others to place TAs in category 3 if the performance on the screening test was borderline.

Although it would be useful to require the Test of Spoken English (TSE) for all international graduate students desiring assistantship support, this requirement would greatly reduce the number of international students eligible for a teaching assistantship prior to coming to the United States, due to the lack of international testing sites and dates. A follow-up comparison of the screening committee's ratings with the scores reported on the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) test for each TA, showed the not expected result that there is no correlation between the scores reported on the TOEFL test or any of its component parts and oral English language competence.

Although the present screening procedure occurs after an assistantship has been awarded, and in some cases requires shuffling the teaching assignments for TAs, the procedures described here allow the department to create a pool of qualified TAs and thereby establish the necessary flexibility to meet its teaching mission. The present process satisfies the legislature's mandate and has received the endorsement of the university community. The number of complaints received from undergraduate students about the English speaking ability of international TAs at the university has been greatly reduced. The TAs currently enrolled in the TA training program feel, in general, that the additional confidence and language skills they are developing will assist them greatly in becoming better teachers. Although the screening process requires considerable overhead in time, the generally satisfactory results ensure its continued implementation.

John S. Eck is Associate Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Toledo.

Innovative ITA Screening Techniques

Patricia Carrell, Susanne Sarwark, and Barbara Plakans

The purpose of this session was to present some ways of testing the oral proficiency of international teaching assistants/associates (ITAs) before they are given teaching assignments by their departments. These screening techniques have been tailored to the needs of the universities using them, and stress the importance of viewing language competency within the context of the teaching environment. One technique is an oral interview approach used at Southern Illinois University, and two are mock-teaching tests used at The Ohio State University and Iowa State University. Patricia Carrell described the Iowa approach, Susanne Sarwark described the mock-teaching test at The Ohio State University, and Barbara Plakans described the mock-teaching test at Iowa State University.

Southern Illinois University–Oral Interview Test

Although not required by law until recently (legislation passed in November 1986 and effective January 1, 1987), Southern Illinois University has had a policy since 1974 mandating the testing of the oral English proficiency of international teaching assistants. The policy states: "Every international student assigned a graduate assistantship with teaching duties must pass an oral examination conducted by the Center for English as a Second Language before undertaking classroom duties. A representative of the appointing department and of the Graduate School must participate in the examination" (Graduate Catalog 1986). Since 1984 the Graduate School has tied compliance with the policy to the processing of graduate assistant contracts. The Graduate School has developed a procedure for soliciting from the appointing unit information about the intended assignment of a graduate assistant, and if the unit anticipates assigning the student teaching duties any time within the contract period, and if the student has not already passed the exam, the Graduate School insists that the appointing unit schedule the oral examination for the student before the contract is processed further. If the student should fail the exam, the unit understands that they must reassign the student to nonteaching duties. Approximately 90 of these oral interview examinations are conducted every year.

The examination is scheduled at a time mutually convenient for the student, the department representative, the representative from the Center for English as a Second Language (a tenured and highly experienced ESL faculty member), and the representative from the Graduate School (generally one of the Associate Deans). Approximately 30 minutes is allowed for the examination. The examination begins by soliciting from the student general information for the files: Name (including correct spelling), country, major, degree sought, TOEFL score and date. Next the interviewer turns to soliciting from the student general information and trying to put the student at ease. Topics discussed in this part of the interview include the student's reasons for choosing Southern Illinois University, discussion of the student's chosen field of study and major emphasis, and plans for graduation and the future. In the next part of the interview, student information is solicited about prior teaching experience, and, from the department representative as well as from the student, information about the nature of the projected teaching assignment. In light of the latter, the department representative is invited to pose something for the student to teach or explain, generally by going to the blackboard. The other two act as potential students in the relevant setting (lecture, laboratory, help session), asking the kinds of questions likely to be posed by students in such a setting. The purpose of interrupting with questions is to assess the candidate's ability to understand the questions, to respond appropriately, and to interact in relevant academic dialogue with potential students. After approximately 20 to 25 minutes, the candidate is excused from the room and invited to either wait in the hall to learn the results immediately or to return to the department and learn the results from the department representative later in the day.

After the student leaves, each of the three examiners rates the student independently on three scales: (a) comprehension (how well the student understood what was said to him or her), (b) pronunciation/accent (how comprehensible the student's pronunciation and accent were), and (c) fluency, (how grammatically and fluently the student spoke). The result of the oral interview examination is a consensus of all three examiners, arrived at immediately upon comparison of ratings. On a five-point scale, with "1" being "native-like," students pass if they score at least "2" on each of the three scales. The three examiners agree that students have clearly "passed," or clearly "not passed." If the examiners feel that the students' English is basically acceptable, but something about their oral English would preclude the full range of possible teaching assignments, the committee may issue a "restricted pass," limiting the students' assignments, for example, to help sessions, laboratories under close supervision, relatively small classes as opposed to large lecture sections, or to relatively advanced classes with majors who have more background than general studies or freshmen students. If students fail or are given a restricted pass, they may be retested the next semester. In general, the raters are close in their independent assessments and have no difficulty reaching consensus. Finally, letters detailing the results of the examinations are sent from the Graduate School to the departments, and a copy is placed in each student's permanent graduate assistant file in the Graduate School.

If a student fails or is given a restricted pass, remedial work is often recommended in the form of a special ITA class offered by the university through the Center for English as a Second Language.

Ohio State University–Mock-Teaching Test

The State of Ohio now requires the boards of trustees of all state-assisted colleges and universities to certify the spoken English proficiency of teaching associates. Beginning in the autumn of 1986, certification in spoken English proficiency was required of the approximately 200 international TAs or prospective ITAs entering the Graduate School. There are two routes to certification:

1. By scoring 230 or better on the Test of Spoken English (TSE) or SPEAK test; and

2. By passing a mock-teaching test on an assigned topic from their discipline. Students with SPEAK scores falling between 200 and 230 have the option of taking an initial mock-teaching test. If their performance on the test is judged acceptable, the TAs will be certified for teaching. If not, they will be required to take one or two quarters of spoken English coursework. Students scoring below 200 on the

TSE or SPEAK will automatically be placed in a spoken English course. The mock-teaching test is also used as the exit test for the upper-level spoken English course. After successfully completing coursework, students take the mock-teaching test as a final screening for teaching certification.

The purpose of the mock-teaching test is to provide a chance for graduate students to demonstrate their ability to communicate in a classroom situation. The test consists of a 10- to 12-minute lesson that the prospective ITA "teaches" to a panel of raters (ESL staff, one faculty member representing the ITA's department, and one "outside" faculty rater) who act as the TA's "students." The test is videotaped and the tape is filed.

Thirty minutes before the assigned testing time, ITAs arrive at the preparation room and receive material consisting of: (a) a course description sheet for a course in their major department, and (b) two very basic topics taken from their field of study, topics that would typically be covered in an elementary course in their field. They are instructed to divide their allotted 10 to 12 minutes into an introduction (one minute or less), a brief discussion of the course description (two to three minutes), and a lesson built on one of the two topics (five to seven minutes). No separate time is allotted for questions; the raters, acting as "students," ask questions throughout the presentation.

As soon as the presentation is over and the ITA has left the room, the raters evaluate the ITA's performance, assessing spoken English, listening comprehension, interaction with the class, and presentational/teaching ability, to determine whether the ITA may be certified. Raters generally agree in their evaluation; if, however, consensus is not reached, the videotape of the performance is sent to a member of the ESL advisory board for final decision.

Students may pick up the results of their test within a few days of the testing; official results of the test are reported to the student's department and to the Graduate School. Since a department representative is generally present at the testing, that department knows immediately the outcome of the student's tests and may begin to assign teaching duties to those who have passed the screening.

International students who do not score 230 on the TSE or SPEAK nor pass the mock-teaching test may still hold teaching assistantships, but are limited to performing duties not requiring direct student contact. Until these international students have completed spoken English coursework and passed the "exit" mock-teaching test, they serve as graders or set up laboratory experiments. Departments offering TAships before certification are committed to providing support for as long as three quarters.

Iowa State University–TEACH Test

In 1985, the Graduate College at Iowa State University began supplementing the SPEAK test as the spoken English proficiency instrument for ITAs with a mock lecture test. Called TEACH (Taped Evaluation of Assistants' Classroom Handling), this instrument attempts to identify what specific aspects of teaching are likely to present problems for the approximately 150 new teaching assistants each year who are not native speakers of English.

Examinees register for TEACH a day before taking the test, and are each given a topic from a list suggested by their major department, a textbook in which the assigned topic appears, and instructions on how to prepare for the test.

Test presentations take place in a typical university classroom, last 10 minutes, and consist of three parts: (a) a minute to allow the examinee to become familiar with the physical surroundings, meet the "class" (three student questioners, two raters, a test proctor, and camera technician), and write a few terms, formulae, etc., on the chalkboard; (b) up to five minutes to explain some aspect of the assigned topic clearly and in words that an undergraduate class could understand; and (c) three minutes of questions about the topic asked by the student questioners.

The two raters (ESL instructors who have been trained to evaluate performances on both SPEAK and TEACH) rate the examinee's presentation on the spot, but it is videotaped as well. The videotape serves a number of useful purposes: (a) If the raters do not agree in their evaluation of an examinee, a third rating is done of the videotaped performance. (b) Examinees who pass the test are urged to look at their tapes after receiving test results as a way of self-critiquing their teaching performance. (c) The tapes are useful diagnostic tools for instructors of the remedial courses for TAs. (d) Examinees can see what progress they have made by comparing their TEACH performances before and after taking remedial courses. (e) The tapes are used for research concerning the speaking and comprehending problems of TAs and for the design of curriculum material.

Raters score each performance using four categories: (a) overall comprehensibility of spoken English, (b) awareness of appropriate teacher-student relationships in a United States university classroom setting, (c) ability to understand and answer students' questions, and (d) teaching skill (explaining a topic clearly, using supporting evidence and/or examples, addressing a class, using the chalkboard, and showing interest in the subject and in the students as learners). The rating scale of 0-3 is modeled on the SPEAK test scale: 0–not competent, 1–not adequate, 2–minimally adequate, and 3–competent.

In addition to the trained raters, the student questioners, who are undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at Iowa State University, also make an assessment of the ITAs' overall impression on a scale of 0 to 9. Involvement of students in the testing process has been useful both in getting the opinions of nonexperts, who do not have "trained ears" for accents, and in promoting better public relations with the undergraduates whose complaints about ITAs originally led to the university's certification program.

Examinees who lack particular skills are assigned to remediation modules that dovetail with the four performance categories listed above. Results of TEACH and SPEAK are reported within two days of the test administration to examinees and to the departments that are considering them for assistantships.

An advantage of the TEACH test has been the concern it has focused on teaching skills as well as spoken English skills. Iowa State is currently considering more careful screening and training of all TAs, not only those who are not native English speakers. Disadvantages are the costs of hiring so many people (about two dozen) as raters, questioners, proctors, etc., and the difficulty of scheduling performances.

Patricia Carrell is Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Southern Illinois University; Susanne Sarwark is Director of the Spoken English Program at The Ohio State University; and Barbara Plakans is Coordinator of the ITA Program at Iowa State University.

Being Seduced by Face Validity: Linguistic and Administrative Issues in Videotaped Teaching Simulation Testing

Patricia Byrd

Although no formal survey has yet been completed of the features of the various ITA screening and testing systems, discussion with the administrators of such testing programs have led me to understand that most involve some type of videotaped teaching simulation test. Those programs that do not use videotaped teaching simulation testing are either planning to add it or wishing that they could.

The emergence of videotaped teaching simulations as a major feature in ITA testing and evaluation seems to result from two interrelated issues: (a) Program designers, teachers, and international students have not been convinced that other less direct types of tests are either accurate or fair. To ITAs as well as teachers, simulations have strong face validity. Moreover, when videotaped, these tests provide the institution with the comfort of having records of the performance of ITAs that can be used to justify decisions about their teaching assignments. (b) Teachers, researchers, and program administrators have realized that the problems of ITAs are not just a matter of English language skills but also involve cultural and pedagogical skills. Teaching simulations are thought to offer the student an opportunity to demonstrate the communicative competence that results from the combination of skills needed for effective classroom teaching. An added stimulus for this type of testing is widespread dissatisfaction with the appropriateness and accuracy of Educational Testing Service's Test of Spoken English (TSE). Students comment that TSE (or its SPEAK version) does not test their ability as teachers–what does describing a bicycle have to do with being an ITA, they ask.

What this means is that we all like the idea of the teaching simulation. It feels right, and so we do it. Or attempt to do it. What seems at first such a direct and effective measure of the things that we are supposed to measure soon turns out to be as complex as all the other aspects of ITA training programs.

When developing a videotaped simulation test, five questions need to be considered:

1. How is the test to be structured? How long will the ITA speak? On what? To whom? When? Where?
2. Who will evaluate the performance? How will they be selected? How trained? How rewarded?
3. What evaluation instrument will be used? What categories are best tested in this manner? What categories are we supposed to be testing anyway? What scale will be used? How will the scores be reported?
4. Is the test supposed to be a holistic evaluation of communicative competence or is it supposed to be diagnostic (for use in the training course)? Can it be both?
5. Since the giving and evaluation of these tests is greatly time-consuming, who pays for the testing?

As the chair of the ESL department at Georgia State University, I have been especially concerned about the answer to question number five. A simulation test that is supposed to last 15 minutes actually takes more like 30 minutes from beginning to end because of the necessary introductions and conclusions (that do not, of course, end up on the tape). To this is added the 30 minutes or so that is devoted to viewing, discussing, and scoring the tape. An hour is easily consumed by each test–an hour for each of the faculty members and the testing staff members involved. Each 15-minute teaching simulation test involves up to four hours of faculty and staff time. When the cost of materials and equipment is added to these personnel costs, each videotaped teaching simulation costs a good deal more than the $40 we charge to administer the whole ITA test battery (which includes an administration of SPEAK along with two other tests developed by our ESL testing program).

In viewing the videotaped simulations made in the Georgia State ITA testing program, I realized that a significant percentage of the ITAs had such poor spoken English that they were indeed incomprehensible. Experience suggests that if as an experienced ESL teacher I cannot understand the ITA, few United States undergraduates could possibly understand the ITA either. Testing theory and political reality would not allow us to do something so simple as run each of the ITAs past me for a few minutes of conversation. But I did begin to wonder if we did not need a less expensive cut-off test that could be used to decide which of the ITAs would participate in the simulation testing.

Bailey (1982) found that students with linguistic competence below the 1+ FSI level could not be successful in the classroom no matter how good their interpersonal skills. For ITAs with language skills at such a low level, the videotaped simulation test is most likely a waste of time, energy, and funding. Bailey's finding suggests that a less costly, more efficient manner of separating out this lower level should be used first to establish English language proficiency levels as a basis for training and to prevent misuse of the simulation testing.

One method for screening the communication skills of ITAs that has been suggested is using a nondirect test such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the Michigan Test, or a semidirect test such as TSE/SPEAK or Foreign Service Interview (FSI) to make the first cut in evaluating a group of ITAs. Students who fall below some basic level (1+ on FSI or 200 on TSE/SPEAK) are placed into ESL training to improve their linguistic skills. Unfortunately, TSE (and SPEAK) and the FSI are themselves time-consuming tests. Although listening comprehension generally correlates with speaking ability, the relationship is not strong enough for TOEFL and the Michigan Test to be used. What we seem to need is a fast (and as undirty as possible) interview test such as that being developed by Pat Barrett at Michigan State University (Barrett, 1986). Such testing formalizes the use of the experience of ESL teachers to divide the ITAs into two groups: Group 1 is made up of those with such poor spoken English that they must have intensive pronunciation training prior to any teaching assignment. Group 2 consists of those who should be evaluated with a teaching simulation test to see if they can be given teaching assignments, or they will need training to prepare them for teaching.

If such a method is used, the simulation test of teaching ability would, logically, need to test some other level of speaking ability, since basic skills of pronunciation, stress, intonation, etc., have already been tested. We need to think through the skills involved in lecturing and public speaking so that these are the skills being tested by the teaching simulation rather than what Carroll (1980) has called the "enabling" skills–of basic pronunciation, stress, etc.

Most of us would agree that being a good conversationalist does not guarantee that one will be a good lecturer–and vice versa. (This generalization is as true for native speakers of English as for ITAs.) What linguistic features distinguish lecturing from conversing? Lecturers take longer turns, speaking frequently for most of the class period with only brief turns taken by students. Lecturers generally need to speak louder and with more voice projection or they must learn to modulate their voices through public address systems. Lecturers repeat in patterns different from those used in conversation, going back over phrases and terms that should be put in notes by students. Lecturers are expected to use a larger and more educated vocabulary. Lecturers are expected to use longer and more complete sentences. Lecturers are frequently expected to be able to write (on the board or the overhead transparency) and talk at the same time.

Political and pedagogical forces have pushed our institutions into rapid development of ITA testing and training. Now that we have the basic systems in place, it is time for reconsideration of the nature of our task and of the most effective ways of achieving it. The high face validity of videotaped simulation testing has seduced many of us into using it inappropriately for the testing of basic speaking skills. The method is just too expensive to be used without serious thought about ways to limit it to appropriate uses with students whose basic speaking has already been judged comprehensible. One of the major needs of ITA testing programs is a fast, accurate test to separate the poor speakers from the adequate speakers. Only with such a test can we gain better control over the high cost of ITA training.

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Patricia Byrd is Chair of the English as a Second Language Department at Georgia State University.

6. Task Force Reports and Reflections on the Conference

Introduction

In addition to the 54 scheduled plenary and concurrent sessions, five task forces met during the TA conference program to explore how continuing work could be done in: establishing a clearinghouse of materials on TA development, publishing research and scholarly reports on teaching assistants, planning a national database on TAs, setting up a consultant exchange, and developing cooperative proposals for funding TA activities.

Despite the full schedule of sessions at the conference, the task forces approached their work seriously and energetically, finding time to meet and formulate an agenda for continuing activities. The number of members on each task force exceeded all preconference expectations, testifying to the commitment and proactive orientation of the conference participants. Several task forces continued to work through correspondence and telephone networks following the conference.

The reports of the task forces are printed in this section. They outline the scope of the task as perceived by each group, initial decisions on direction, and implementation activities that have been undertaken or are being planned.

The task force reports are followed by reflections on the conference by two of four participants who were invited to summarize their observations at the conference wrap-up session. These four participants were chosen to parallel perspectives offered at the first plenary session by a graduate dean, a department chair, a faculty developer, and a teaching assistant. The two perspectives reflected in these readings are those of the graduate dean and the department chair.

From the perception of the graduate dean, Dean Jaros argues that attention at the conference was disproportionately focused on improving undergraduate instruction through the development of TAs as teachers. He believes that, in their zeal to improve TA pedagogical development, most conference participants deemphasized or ignored the responsibilities of the university for graduate instruction and research and scholarship. This imbalance, Jaros suggests, threatens to dilute the potential effectiveness of the developers and to create an aura of moral superiority that will alienate others, thus running the risk of being counterproductive. He affirms the functionality of the teaching assistantship for serving the multiple purposes that have to be served, and urges that efforts to improve this arrangement keep graduate education and research in mind.

William Eadie, speaking from the perspective of the department chair, elaborates on some of the same potential conflicts that Jaros notes. He observes that those involved in improving TA pedagogical development are caught between several disparities: the needs for both departmental autonomy and centralized control, the sometimes conflicting values on good teaching and on research, the desire for quality programs and the limitations of the budget, and our espoused values juxtaposed with our lack of action and a climate that in many ways does not support those values. He suggests that effective solutions to TA development must, in part, help to resolve these dilemmas.

At the conference, the remaining participants in the wrap-up session referred to the "other" conference program that occurred in addition to the formal scheduled sessions. They talked about the quality discussions that took place in the hotel corridors, the learning that took place through materials exchanges and the previewing of videotapes, and the networks that were formed for continuing consultation and assistance. In the aftermath of the conference, participants have reported on some very gratifying effects of the meeting, including immediate initiatives for change and program development that are being undertaken at institutions throughout the nation. It is our hope that the energy behind those initiatives continues to flow, and that this book of readings makes some of the expertise and dedication of the conference participants available to a wider audience.

–Nancy Chism

Task Force Report: Establishing a National Clearinghouse of Materials Developed for TA Training

Jody Nyquist

Background

On November 16, 1986, representatives of 47 graduate institutions gathered at the first National Conference on the Employment and Education of Teaching Assistants to form a task force to establish a clearinghouse for teaching assistant materials. The number of persons interested in the topic was three times that anticipated, which serves to underscore the felt need for an organized system of information-sharing.

Task force members discussed the scope of such a clearinghouse, including the types of materials to be included, location, and cost. There was little interest in the development of a library to house a physical inventory of materials. Rather, the need expressed was for access to information that would allow the sharing of materials related to the teaching assistant function.

As an outgrowth of the discussions, three subcommittees were appointed. Each group will research the ideas suggested and develop a set of recommendations by February 1987.

The ERIC Special Collection Committee, chaired by Margaret Pryately (University of Oklahoma), will explore the possibility of developing a special collection that will become accessible throughout the ERIC Collection. If through subsequent discussions this plan becomes feasible, task force members will meet with ERIC representatives at American Educational Research Association (AERA) in April. ERIC made it clear that the materials must be prescreened by an outside committee of experts.

A second committee, the Exploration of a Review Process Committee, chaired by Lynda Morton (University of Missouri), will develop guidelines for preliminary descriptor categories for the collection, selection standards, and the recruitment of reviewers. At present about 30 reviewers have volunteered. Initial plans will be shared with ERIC officials at the AERA meetings.

The third committee was charged with developing a proposal for the establishment of the clearinghouse by the Council of Graduate Deans. The plan would include the development of a computer-based bibliographic system that would allow the cataloging of a broad set of materials. The initial proposal has been forwarded to Jules LaPidus, President of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States, to be presented at the CGS March board meeting.

While it might seem that the committee is following conflicting paths, acceptance of the clearinghouse concept by both ERIC and CGS could lead to the development of a comprehensive system. Of necessity, the physical documents included in the ERIC system will be limited both as to number and scope. A bibliographic system maintained by CGS could provide access to the broad range of training materials, administrative guidelines, recruitment materials, etc., as well as cross-referencing to ERIC listings.

In addition, Janet Constantinides at the University of Wyoming has agreed to continue the special Clearinghouse for ITA Training Materials. When we get something in place in TA training, she is willing to cross-reference her materials, although she desires not to have a review process herself but to forward the materials to the reviewers for their consideration.

In summary, the members of the Task Force on Establishing a Clearinghouse of Materials for TA Training have been very active since the Ohio conference, and we are hopeful that the outcome will provide systematic access to TA training materials that have been developed in institutions across the country.

Jody Nyquist is Director for Instructional Development at the Center for Instructional Development and Research, University of Washington.

Task Force Report: Publishing TA-Related Research and Scholarship

Robert J. Menges

This task force concluded that a number of useful purposes would be served by organizing and disseminating existing TA-related research and scholarship and by stimulating careful planning and conduct of future research. Our report discusses: (a) the content of TA-related research, (b) the audiences for such research, (c) appropriate publication outlets, and (d) some next steps for those interested in TA-related research and scholarship.

Content of TA-Related Research

The task force enumerated five substantive areas in which TA-related research might be gathered, integrated, planned, conducted, and disseminated.

1. Perhaps the most important area deals with teaching assistants' own perceptions of training needs and their responses to training programs. We should know more about how best to gather TA perceptions, and their perceptions should be compared with the perceptions of TA trainers. Involvement of TAs in planning and conducting training programs works to the advantage not only of TAs themselves but also to the advantage of institutionally funded training programs. Research can inform us about the optimal level of TA responsibility in such programs.

2. A second area has to do with the effectiveness of training programs. We need information about who best plans and carries out those programs, where they are most effectively located administratively, the consequences of various combinations of practical and theoretical training components, and the desirable length and intensity of training.

Research on training program effectiveness faces measurement problems. For example, what criteria of program effectiveness are appropriate and what measures against those criteria are best? To what extent are the same criteria and measures useful across disciplines and across institutions? To what extent do training effects decay over time? Can effects be documented in long-term follow-up after graduation and, using cross-cultural measures, can they be documented when international TAs return to teach in their home countries?

3. Research is also needed on a number of communication issues. Classroom communication processes deserve further study, both for American and international TAs. Issues of communication also arise when TAs deal with other parties: course directors, trainers, mentors, and so on. What are the significant issues in those communications and how can training programs mediate communications between those parties?

4. The socialization and the development of teaching assistants require further investigation. How does TA effectiveness change with experience? What is the best sequence of responsibilities and tasks? How quickly can TAs move from a reactive and dependent stance to one that is more initiating and independent, in relation both to students and to mentors? What changes occur over time in TAs'

cognitive complexity, subject matter expertise, willingness to adopt new instructional techniques, and confidence or sense of efficacy? These investigations require longitudinal designs that so far have been rare in research with TAs.

5. A final category of needed research concerns institutional support. What are the existing patterns of institutional support for TA programs, and what can be said about the optimal amount, source, and direction for such program support?

Audiences for TA-Related Research and Scholarship

The most immediate users of TA-related research include teaching assistants themselves, TA trainers, course directors and departmental supervisors who work with TAs, and graduate faculty members who interact with TAs in their courses. Somewhat less direct research consumers include undergraduates for whom TAs are important instructional figures, and researchers whose careers depend in part on producing research about TAs. Persons who make policy regarding TAs are another audience for research, ranging from departmental administrators upward through the administrative hierarchy of the institution. Finally, there are several publics outside the institution to whom research findings might be addressed. These include legislators, the general public, particularly parents of students and prospective students, and funding agencies.

It is important to note that one research report is not appropriate for all of these audiences. Instead, appropriate information in appropriate forms should be prepared to meet the needs of each audience.

Outlets for TA-Related Research

There are a number of places to search for TA-related research and scholarship and a number of outlets where research reports can be placed for dissemination.

Suitable journals include a variety of disciplinary periodicals, for example, *Teaching Physics*, *Teaching of Psychology*, *Communication Education*; publications of the National Association of Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA); and so on. Publications with a more general view of higher education include the *Journal of Higher Education*, *College Teaching*, *Change Magazine*, and the annual volume of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education. Many of the books and sourcebooks published by Jossey-Bass are pertinent to this field, particularly the quarterly sourcebook, *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*. These and other periodicals might be approached about dedicating an issue to the topic of teaching assistants and about individual articles reporting TA-related research. Likewise, the series of AAHE/ERIC Research Reports is an appropriate outlet.

A number of databases hold TA-related research, including ERIC, *Dissertation Abstracts*, and *Higher Education Abstracts*.

While there was some sentiment in the task force that we start a journal on this topic ourselves, there was much more sentiment that we *not* start such a journal. The prevailing view favored using existing communication channels and informing potential users when TA-related research appears in them.

Next Steps

The task force offers several suggestions for postconference consideration.

1. The proceedings of this conference constitute a valuable outlet for TA-related research. Conference presenters should be encouraged to submit items related to

research, and task force reports should be included in the proceedings. We urge that these proceedings be produced and distributed as quickly as possible.

2. With regard to the substance of TA-related research, topics identified in the first part of this report are only a rather superficial beginning. A research agenda should be developed with care, and whatever organizational structure follows this conference should make development of that agenda a high-priority task. An explicit research agenda should help to avoid duplication and may promote cooperation across disciplines and across institutions. It is especially important to articulate this agenda with activities sponsored by the National Center for Research on Improving Postsecondary Teaching and Learning (NCRIPTL).

3. Existing research should be gathered and users informed of its availability. Bibliographies of TA-related research will find a ready audience. An article reviewing recent dissertations dealing with TAs would be useful, as would a synthesis of research on programs that take similar forms on different campuses.

4. Finally, the task force emphasizes that publications need not be limited to journals or even to print media. We note, however, that it is most efficient to make use of existing outlets. For instance, newsletter editors need only the services of, say, a TA research clearinghouse to save them from the burden of original searches. When an appropriate outlet for original research reports is identified, a call for papers might be circulated to those listed in this conference's directory. Wherever possible, we urge that existing outlets with well-defined audiences and well-developed marketing procedures be used and that the audience for TA-related research that this conference has identified be alerted when such items appear.

This task force recognizes that we have made only a beginning in defining what TA-related research is needed and how it should be disseminated. We feel strongly that this is an area deserving continuing commitment and real resources at both institutional and national levels.

Robert J. Menges is Professor, Center for the Teaching Professions, Northwestern University.

Task Force Report: Planning a National Database on TAs

George Karas

This task force, chaired by Richard Smock of the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign, noted that a database on TAs would be very valuable to institutions planning to develop instructional improvement programs for TAs, either at department levels or on a university-wide basis. Further, it should help institutions to determine whether their TA job assignments are comparable.

These and other uses of such a database depend on developing means of collecting data systematically, reliably, and comprehensively. Additionally, the cost of such an effort would be considerable. It is unlikely that an ad hoc group could deal successfully with all of these matters. Accordingly, the task force discussed whether there was some established national group that might be able to take on such a project.

It was noted that the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States (CGS), a cosponsor of this conference, had established a position of director of information services within the past year. If CGS were interested in the project, it might be well suited to serve as coordinator for the effort. Informal contact was made with the new director, Peter Syverson, about the possibility of CGS's interest in such an effort.

He stated that one of the reasons CGS had established the information services position was because there was a need for a centralized source of data regarding graduate studies in the United States. The organization would like to be better able to respond to inquiries about graduate education from government agencies, elected officials, and member institutions.

It is likely that information about graduate assistants and assistantship policies would be very useful. Careful planning of the data elements to be included, of course, would be critical. He recommended that the task force review the type of information appropriate for a TA database and submit an informal proposal to him. He promised to discuss it with the CGS board of directors.

Task force members discussed briefly types of data elements for possible inclusion. Many were simple frequency counts of graduate assistants in various categories (e.g., type of assistantship, field of study, type of assignment, citizenship, etc.). It was also suggested that data be collected about institutional policies and procedures for using, supervising, and evaluating graduate assistants. It was agreed that the task force would submit to CGS early in 1987 a list of recommended data elements.

George Karas is Associate Dean of the Graduate College at Iowa State University.

Task Force Report: Setting up a Consultant Exchange

Delivee L. Wright

A task force group met on November 16, 1986, to discuss needs and mechanisms for establishing a consultant network related to the education and employment of graduate teaching assistants. After some discussion, the group decided that the need was not so great for external, paid consultants, but rather for experienced individuals who would be willing to respond to inquiries about program elements or strategies. It was decided that this task force should develop a strategy to facilitate the sharing of this kind of information.

The following actions will be taken to implement the task force's recommendations:

1. All participants of this conference, as well as members of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education, will receive invitations to participate in this network. They will receive forms on which to list contact information, programs they have done, skills they possess, and ways they can be helpful to others in regard to teaching assistant programs. Submission of the form would indicate a willingness to respond to inquiries from colleagues from other institutions.
2. Completed forms will be submitted to a member of the task force:

   Dr. David Taylor-Way
   Box 46, Roberts Hall
   Cornell University
   Ithaca, New York 14853
   (607) 255-3493

3. Information submitted will be compiled in computer data files by David Taylor-Way.
4. Each person who would like to receive a hard copy printout of the compiled data will be asked to send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for mailing since a postage budget is not available.
5. It is planned that information will eventually be available to institutions via computerized educational information services such as Compuserve, Educom's Bitnet, or a similar service. This would require participants to have access to a computer and modem, and to pay a membership fee to the service provider.

Delivee L. Wright is Director of the Teaching and Learning Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Task Force Report: Cooperative Funding of Proposals

Marilla Svinicki and Robert Young

The questions that concern institutions about the employment, training, and utilization of teaching assistants are found on a wide range of campuses, as evidenced by the participants in the national TA conference. Since there are so many shared problems, the organizers of the conference wisely decided to explore the possibility of initiating cross-campus projects that might have a higher probability of being funded than single institution projects. To carry out this task, a group of conference participants met to outline potential areas of cooperation and study and to assess the feasibility of such projects. The goals as outlined by this task force are:

Goal One. *To coordinate efforts to present a united front on TA training that can be used to influence funding decisions both internal and external to our institutions.* It can often occur that those responsible for the setting of funding priorities lack adequate information on what topics are of most concern to those responsible for the everyday work of TA development and employment. If a group as diverse as that represented by the participants in this conference can agree on what priorities they see for work in the area, their united opinion could be influential in persuading funding agencies and local institutional administrators as to what areas are most deserving of attention. The weight of this united opinion could gain proposals leverage in obtaining funding for projects that reflect those priorities.

To accomplish this goal, the task force recommends a project to review the conference proceedings and preliminary data with an eye to identifying major issues that are viewed by this group as important foci for development and funding. The identified issues would then be circulated among conference participants to determine their relative importance and urgency. The resulting information would then be compiled into a position paper reflecting the sense of this group. This position paper would be forwarded to the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) and the Council of Graduate Schools for their reactions and hopefully their support.

The resulting document could be used in a variety of contexts. It could be a preamble and supporting document for proposals on TA training that conform to its recommendations. It could be the basis for influencing funding agencies and institutional administrations to focus on those issues deemed important by this group. Other uses might arise as the paper develops.

It is proposed that the national planning committee be expanded and extended to serve as a spearhead for accomplishing this first goal. The group should include representatives from the various subgroups represented at the conference, specifically faculty, administrative, teaching assistant, and faculty development representatives and representatives from AAHE and the Council of Graduate Schools.

Goal 2. *To produce a history of what projects have been funded by what sources to serve as a guide for institutions interested in seeking funding or adapting projects to their own circumstances and to serve as an information resource on funding sources and procedures for work on TA training.* The task force felt that awareness of past projects that have been funded for the study of TAs would be a good guide to others who want to pursue funding for their own projects. It is difficult, however, for any single institution or person to identify all the possibilities. By pooling resources, it should be possible to provide a more thorough overview of what has gone before and what is currently available.

To accomplish this goal, the task force recommends a project to produce an historical perspective on what types of projects have been funded either internally or externally. This would be accomplished by two means. First, a survey of participants in the national conference would be conducted to identify who has been successful in obtaining special funding for TA projects and from whom. Second, a review of foundation literature could identify relevant projects that have received external funds. The results of this project would be a compendium of funding sources cross-referenced by the types of projects that have been supported and their stated interests. This compendium can then inform those interested in seeking funding about what alternatives might be available and how they fund projects.

Goal 3. *To develop a network of information to bring together institutions with the same interests in hopes of generating multiinstitutional projects.* Since many funding agencies look favorably on projects that involve more than one institution, and since such projects also increase the generalizability of any findings and hence their usefulness, the task force felt it would be useful to serve as a catalyst to bring together groups and institutions with similar interests to pursue cooperative projects. To accomplish this goal, the task force recommends that the proceedings of the conference be used to generate a preliminary set of common concerns around which interested institutions could form cooperative projects. These concerns could then be circulated to the conference participants, who could indicate their interest in a subset of these concerns. The next phase of the project would be to collate the information by interest and circulate it back to the interested parties. They could then use those lists to pursue joint programs.

Program Oversight

The task force proposes that some members of the national planning committee, plus other interested parties representing other constituencies, form a small nucleus of the potential national coordinating committee and approach funding agencies for a small amount of seed money to fund initial meetings and other expenses, such as telephone costs, postage, and so on. This nuclear group would also design the mechanisms for selecting the expanded national coordinating committee.

In addition to attempting to produce the position paper described above, the national coordinating group would take on the responsibility for organizing future activities similar to the national TA conference. They would also assist the continuation of the work of the other task forces formed at the conference when the initial groups are finished.Members of the current task force on cooperative funding agree to coordinate the initial formation of the national coordinating group and to complete the project on an historical perspective as described above.

Marilla Svinicki is Associate Director of the Center for Teaching Effectiveness at the University of Texas; Robert Young is Director of the Office of Instructional Development at the University of North Dakota.

The Teaching Assistant and the University

Dean Jaros

The meaning of teaching assistants to a sophisticated university is complex. When viewed from an all-university perspective–as opposed to that of the instructional services office alone or that of the individual graduate student–the varied dimensions become quite clear.

The university has many missions. The larger society charges it to accomplish several goals and in most schools no one of them can be subordinated to the others. Judging by the program of this conference, most participants focus very closely on only one university goal–efficient undergraduate teaching. While this is clearly an important goal, such a narrow focus is unfortunate, for the teaching assistant system has implications for at least two other primary institutional goals: efficient graduate instruction and efficient conduct of scholarship.

Similarly, universities always operate under a number of constraints. Chronic concerns about money, course demand, curriculum currency, community relations, etc., require a constant response. Accordingly, a number of devices with a wide range of instrumental features have evolved. The teaching assistant system is one such device and it is easy to envision at least three instrumental features with which it has been endowed: low cost, release of faculty from undergraduate teaching responsibilities, and provision of financial support for graduate students. Once again, the program of this conference does not reveal much interest in any of these instrumentalities except the last–and that only because services (teaching) are demanded in exchange for the financial support. The result is a very truncated understanding of the system–and with limited understanding comes limited ability to maintain the system or to effect desirable changes.

A simple cross-classification of the three putative university missions with the suggested instrumental features of the teaching assistant system is instructive (see Figure I).

Figure 1. The Teaching Assistant System

Institutional Benefits Received	Instrumental Features		
	Low Cost	*Faculty Release from Undergraduate Teaching*	*Provision of Financial Support to Graduate Students*
Efficient Undergraduate Instruction	I	2	III
Efficient Graduate Instruction	4	V	VI
Efficient Conduct of Scholarship	7	VIII	9

It yields a nine-cell matrix. Each cell defines a possible series of effects, and at least five of them–those designated by roman numerals–deserve consideration. This conference has devoted its attention to cell III, with the exception of an occasional minor bow in the general direction of cell VI. To be sure, this is an important cell. If the exchange of the university's money for the graduate student services does not produce good undergraduate instruction, the system is in deep trouble. On the other hand, it is obvious that the teaching assistantship system generates important consequences far beyond the borders of cell III.

The teaching assistantship system has many constituents. All must derive some real or perceived benefits–or at least not be grievously offended–if they are to participate in it and help make it work. Persons fixed on cell III seem to think in terms of at most three constituencies: undergraduate students, the assistants themselves, and, as protective agent, the instructional services office. This is inadequate for two reasons. First, at least two of these three constituencies have interests in what happens in other cells. Undergraduates are obviously concerned with cell I. Graduate students enjoy important intellectual stimulation as well as job-related training as a direct result of their teaching assistant activities. In addition, they profit by exposure to a faculty whose energies are not totally consumed by excessive undergraduate teaching responsibilities. While instructional service office types may fit solely within cell III, one may ask whether they should. Second, numerous other constituencies whose active contribution to a healthy system is required confront many other cells in the matrix daily. These are, for example, faculty in general, department heads, line deans, the graduate school, the financial aid office, foreign student advisers, provosts, presidents, boards and commissions, legislatures and governors.

Again, judging from the program of this conference, there is a tendency to either ignore these constituencies, or worse, regard them as unenlightened heathen. If one's only goal is to train teaching assistants to do a better job in the classroom, and if one pursues this with religious zeal, a characteristic orientation may result. Consciousness raising taken to the point of evangelism may generate a feeling of moral superiority. A belief that one has exclusive insights into the necessity of good teaching and that this is the only end worth seeking leads to great energy–as well as proclamation of the faith and disparagement of the irrelevance, stupidity, or heresy of administrators, the establishment, or the university.

Regarding the other constituencies as loathsome or perverse is counterproductive in the extreme. If we desire them to support the teaching assistant system to a greater degree, preaching the Received Word that has been revealed only to the cell III priesthood will not suffice. The general faculty are deeply interested in a viable teaching assistantship system–but because of events in cell V, VI, and VIII in addition to III. Department heads, insofar as they have interests beyond being faculty, look also to cell I. They will buy the teaching assistant system if it means cheap instruction that generates budgetary flexibility for them. To be sure, most people in universities retain a series of academic ideals and these importantly determine behavior. But those ideals cannot and should not determine every decision made. Budgetary incentives are important in all organizations; the cost of forgetting (or denying) this is loss of effectiveness.

A number of constituents–vice-presidents for research and sponsored projects offices for substantive reasons and presidents, perhaps, for reputational ones–are concerned about cell VIII. The cell VIII constituents are especially interesting because they have a very large stake in the teaching assistantship system. In addition, to be blunt, they are powerful. Unfortunately, many do not want an intellectual alliance with them because of a totally inappropriate belief that there is some sort of antithesis between the conduct of scholarship and good teaching. This error is compounded by a practical one of declining common cause with influential potential allies.

The teaching assistant system is one of the best devices ever created for the facilitation of faculty research.

External constituencies, especially state level officials, are notoriously concerned with cell I, and to the extent that university missions other than the undergraduate are understood, cells 4 and 7 as well. While it is certainly part of the responsibility of university officers to convince external constituencies that doing things on the cheap is not always desirable, we should not forget that one of the great benefits of the teaching assistant system is that it can indeed produce quality instruction at a very reasonable cost. It is foolish not to exploit this.

To those with a cell III orientation, the necessity of building support among such diverse groups may seem very burdensome; the methods used and the arguments required may appear repugnant. On the other hand, the multicell nature of the teaching assistant system may be thought of as a great advantage. The various constituencies are not necessarily best thought of as interests that must be placated, but instead may be regarded as sources of strong support. Consider, for contrast, a program of graduate fellowships; it is strictly a cell VI phenomenon. To be sure, support may come from persons–such as influential community notables or powerful government officials–who are concerned about individual merit and who want to help deserving youth, but simple observation shows that such largess is infrequent. Fellowships support only a small fraction of American graduate students. Concerns about how to get research done and how to keep costs low are not engaged by fellowships at all; concomitant support is not forthcoming.

In a word, the teaching assistant system is a remarkable device that serves the interests of many university constituencies. To be sure, its several purposes may at times be a frustration to those with a small number of passionately held goals. It may resemble a huge coalition all of whose members must be accommodated–with resultant decline in ideological purity and increase in administrative effort. But at the same time, the large number of potential beneficiaries indicates potential support to keep it viable even through these very difficult times for higher education. It is in all of our best interests to promote this system as well as the alliances, cooperative efforts, reciprocal understandings, and university-wide perspectives that it entails.

Dean Jaros is Dean of the Graduate School at Colorado State University.

A National Conference on Teaching Assistants: A Department Chair's Response

William F. Eadie

Soon after I arrived at the conference I encountered a speech communication colleague who exclaimed, "Bill, what are you doing here?" As I continued to attend the conference I had cause to wonder about that question. After all, I chair a department in an institution whose primary mission is teaching, and we use teaching assistants in a way that seems somewhat different from those described by speakers from research-oriented universities. Nevertheless, the conference sessions interested me, even if only from the perspective of a "naive scientist" who might be trying to make sense of what went on in order to be able to respond to it at the end.

So, what I attempted to do was to listen to how various participants talked about being, working with, and managing TAs. I took into account the content of what was being said, but I also looked in particular for ways in which speakers "dramatized" their messages, as those who study communication in culture have found such dramatizations to be particularly useful in interpreting the subtext of messages. On the basis of what is admittedly a superficial analysis of incomplete field notes, I will draw several conclusions about where we are now and suggest what ideas I will be taking home with me.

What I Learned from Listening to the Talk

The results of my analysis can be divided into a main effect and several interaction effects. The main effect is not particularly surprising: Administrators talk like administrators, faculty talk like faculty, and teaching assistants are unsure about how they should sound. The administrators used such action-oriented phrases as "We blew it," and "We need to get our house in order," during their presentations. Faculty were more reflective; they said such things as "I wish I had more time," and "Make students partners, not adversaries." TAs were often self-conscious; one was quoted as saying, "I personally feel that I'm always failing in something." The fact that this quotation drew sympathetic murmurs from the rest of the audience says more to me about the state of teaching assistants than could the entire conference.

The interaction effects were more pointed, in that they showed that our tone changed when we were less sure of our topics. There were many highly effective presentations about training programs for TAs, new developments in using TAs creatively in the classroom, and research on TAs. Nevertheless, we hit a number of snags, which were quickly reflected in a more uncertain tone. Among the disparities I could pick out were:

- We want to create effective campus policies governing selection, training, and use of TAs, but we also want the greatest extent of departmental autonomy possible.
- We want TAs to value their teaching more than they seem to in some disciplines, but we are not sure how to go about achieving that goal,

especially in departments where the faculty value their research substantially more than their teaching.

- We want TAs to be good teachers, but the effort we put into ensuring that varies not only between disciplines but often from department to department within the same discipline.
- We want to be able to give our students who are not native speakers of English an opportunity to gain teaching experience (in some disciplines we could not cover our teaching commitments without using those individuals in the classroom), but the methods we currently have for ensuring that these TAs speak clearly and understandably are expensive beyond the capability of most universities.
- We recognize the value–to the TA, the department, and the undergraduate students enrolled in our classes–of socializing the TA as quickly as possible, but we are often content to let that occur "naturally" (and consequently, unevenly).

What I Will Take Home with Me

Despite being able to have some fun with the language usage of the participants in preparing these concluding remarks, there are at least three major things I learned here that I can take back to my department and my institution. Here they are, along with their implications for my work as a department chair.

1. *TA development is a special case of faculty development.* If the faculty in my department or at my university are reluctant to accept change in their manner of teaching, then the TAs are going to be both harder to train and less likely to improve. My job as chair, then, is to promote an attitude that teaching is an important activity, that improvement of teaching is something we expect of each other, and that formal programs aimed at improving teaching need to be taken seriously.

2. *We cannot wait for the university to do TA development.* Some of those present are blessed with university-wide offices of faculty development that plan programs for all faculty, including TAs. While those offices are often helpful, we cannot leave the training of TAs to them. TAs are too important to our departments, and we must tailor the training process to their special needs. For me that means recruiting faculty who will be enthusiastic and will connect best with the TAs to do the training, both at the beginning and on an ongoing basis. If our TAs have special needs (such as work on English usage and pronunciation), this area, too, needs to be our concern. Just as we cannot rely on the English department alone to teach our undergraduate students how to write, so we cannot rely solely on other departments to ensure the comprehensibility of our TAs in the classroom.

3. *The department culture needs to be structured so that the value of good teaching is stressed.* Many of the departments represented here already have well developed elements in their cultures valuing good scholarship and good research. These values are often displayed through colloquia emphasizing the sharing of current research, recognition of publications and professional presentations, and rewarding the top researchers with tangible symbols such as pay, office location, and access to department resources. We need to bring much of this same reward system to the development of good teaching. Recognition of good teaching, sharing it with our colleagues, holding colloquia to talk about the improvement of teaching, and valuing the kind of teaching that "fits ideas to students and students to ideas" (to

paraphrase Donald C. Bryant's definition of rhetoric) ought to be as much a department priority as research.

Before coming to this conference I attended the Speech Communication Association's national meeting in Chicago. There I heard a program paying tribute to a recently retired member of the faculty of a large state university. In responding to the program, the honoree took issue with the recent national report that called for the appointment of distinguished teachers, as well as distinguished researchers, in research-oriented universities. Nonsense, the gentleman snorted, there is no such thing as a distinction between teaching and research. We must all do research *in order to be good teachers.* While I believe that my colleague is basically correct, I sense a need to communicate the emphasis of his remarks to TAs: We need to do research, but we need to do so *in order* to be good teachers. I therefore welcome what has gone on here for the past several days as a step in the right direction.

William F. Eadie is Chair of the Department of Speech Communication at California State University in Northridge.